Performing Greensboro

Hooker, D.A.

Publication date:
2014

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Performing Greensboro:

Using Foucauldian Analysis to Deconstruct *'Trouble in Mind'* and Generate Alternative Community Narratives

Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan Tilburg University op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. Ph. Eijlander, in het openbaar te verdedigen ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties aangewezen commissie in de Ruth First zaal van de Universiteit op maandag 15 september 2014 om 10.15 uur door David Anderson Hooker, geboren op 15 oktober 1958 te Cincinnati Ohio, USA

Promotores: prof. dr. J. Winslade
prof. dr. S. McNamee

Promotiecommissie:

prof. dr. D. Wulff
prof. dr. J.B. Rijsman
prof. dr. S. Bava
dr. C. Camargo Borges

DEDICATIONS

To: Anderson Walker, Sr. and Pauline Hill Walker, who gave me tools to overcome motion sickness and start this tremendous journey.

To: Homer, R. Hooker –Dad (Pbuh). Thanks for blazing a trail; sorry you missed this stage of the trip.

To: The great cloud of witnesses – named, unnamed, and unnamable – that have pursued a freedom agenda in myriad ways and keep extending the invitation to follow in their footsteps and blaze new paths.

Contact: wecanworkitout@mindspring.com
ISBN - ISBN-13: 978-0-9906779-0-1

Printed in Tilburg, Netherlands by Ridderprint

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any project that I have ever undertaken, especially those with any level of intellectual rigor, have been sparked by conversations, comments, a passage read or a sight or sound that at the moment I did not fully appreciate its significance. It is for this reason that it is not possible for me to acknowledge by name every person or event that has contributed to the production of this paper. Those I acknowledge are the obvious and visible but this is not intended to be the exhaustive statement of appreciations. In this spirit, I acknowledge:

God, family, and friends who have supported me in this process through prayer, kind and encouraging words, patience, and timely nudges to stay focused. Thanks Mom, for your commitment to learning and documenting the journey. I give a special acknowledgement to my sister, Marg, who held the house together while my focus was elsewhere.

I very much appreciate the Taos Institute faculty and staff. I am especially thankful for my advisor and chief conversation partner, John Winslade. John, I appreciate your gentle and yet persistent guidance. You pushed and pulled and waited as I found my way, and you insisted that the way I find and the voice I use be my own. To Dan Wulff for challenging, prodding and affirming and to Saliha Bava for reminding me that ethics of engagement extend beyond written protocols.

I acknowledge Mary Louise Frampton, J. Lamar Gibson, Kevin Stewart Smith and the members of what has become the Greensboro Counter Stories Project for allowing me to participate in your journey. Along with so many other members of the Greensboro and Guilford County community that spoke with, guided, counseled and informed my work; to Preston Lane, the Board, and staff of the Triad Theatre and the cast of *Trouble in Mind* for the courage to start this conversation in Greensboro.

Many special thanks to my early and consistent conversation partners, Ronald Walter Galvin, Joy L. Gallmon, and Stephanie Marie Crumpton. To Rich, Paul, Shari D., Vik, and the rest of my caffeine consuming community at Tilt and Drip who talked, laughed, encouraged, and then were silent when needed. To those who actually laid hands on the project by reading, critiquing, editing, and copy editing: Cristina Graf, Melanie A. H. Johnson, Angela D. Turk, and Dr. Geneva Baxter. Finally, a very special thanks to Dr. Tracy Renee Rone who encouraged me very early on to take this journey and then found me at the end to see it through to the end and helped guide my defense. You are appreciated.

ABSTRACT

As scholarship evolves to embrace race and other identity markers as social constructs, so too should methods of community engagement incorporate constructionist principles and practices. The author argues that various familiar models of community engagement used for undoing socially constructed inequities are ineffective because they operate from positivist or structuralist assumptions about identity. He posits that among the practices emerging from "the narrative turn" in constructionism, *narrative mediation*, when structured for collective processes, is better-suited for adaptation to community engagement in the context of *compressed* and *conflict-saturated narratives*. Using race as an example, this study introduces two community engagement dialogue practices to the context of Greensboro, North Carolina, — *narratively modified focused conversations* and *narrative restorative community conferencing* – each of which is grounded in social constructionism and derived from narrative principles.

This study was conducted as a qualitative investigation using a *bricolagic* combination of methods. The dialogue practices weave together focus groups, *Freirian emancipatory dialogue,* principles and questioning practices drawn from narrative mediation, restorative conferencing, and collective narrative practices.

The study reports on the initial testing of both methods during two focus group sessions facilitated in the fall of 2012. For the first conversation, twenty-eight and, for the second, twenty-two diverse community members first viewed "*Trouble in Mind*," a play by Alice Childress which was performed by the Triad Stage, a local theater company. Using the play as a Freirian code or problem-posing material, the participants joined in a discussion that analyzed the problematics of the Greensboro community that result in unequal lived experience across racial, ethnic, and geographic lines.

The analysis process can also best be described as bricolage. The facilitation methods were evaluated using Turnbull's (2002) eight stages of social constructionist theory-building, Riessman's (2008) assessment of internal coherence for narrative methods, and they were also evaluated by considering the extent to which they comported with Heikkinen, Huttunen, and Syrjala's (2007) five principles for validation of narrative action research. In addition to analyzing the facilitation methods, the content of the two conversations is analyzed in the light of Michel

Foucault's conceptualization of power/knowledge and Judith Butler's conceptualization of performativity. The author also advances his model of *granular communications* and demonstrates its explanatory value for communications processes and how that model can guide inquiry for counselors, mediators, and community action facilitators.

The study finds the methods to be internally coherent and to be experienced by participants as organic, contextually relevant, democratic, and revelatory. In the context of a Foucauldian power analysis, it is argued that socially constructed divisions in communities, even those that have been legally and violently produced and reinforced over a long time, can best be discussed in discursive and performative terms. This approach also holds great promise for the deconstruction of conflict-saturated narratives, for opening up compressed narratives to fuller articulation, and for building action agendas toward radical community transformation.

Key Words: *narrative*; *deconstruction*; *narrative compression*; *power/knowledge*; *performativity*; *community transformation*, *Michel Foucault*; *race*; *equity*; *bricolage*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.

In the Pulitzer Prize-winning story of America's "Great Migration," entitled *The Warmth of Other Suns,* Isabel Wilkerson describes a people who *en masse* rejected a societal position call. They were resisting the narrative of subservience and inequality and seeking a place in life where they might have full opportunities to pursue their own choices, the safety to express both their joys and discontents, and the ability to live lives previously only available to them in imagination and literature. What they left in pursuit of were new horizons of possibility. The theatre in which they wanted to operate was one in which their voice had equal amplification and their actions had equal significance in the overall theme of the drama; where their characters were equally well-lit, and the stage was set so that they could perform to the full extent of their humanity.

Lack of freedom, equity, and the sense of a limited possibility horizon for some people based on socially constructed aspects of their being, like race, gender, ethnicity, or religion has weighed on many people as a burden that they seek to lift from themselves and from the larger society. The shared experience of inequality as a burden on the entire society is reflected by the numbers of people who have chosen to involve themselves in many different efforts throughout the years.

In the United States, the abolitionists, participants in the Underground Railroad, New England missionaries who moved South to establish freedom schools and colleges after Emancipation, and so many others had their continuing legacies in the Civil Rights movement and the African and Caribbean liberation struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. Today, their efforts continue through the many people in modern times who participate in various programs designed to reconsider or re-discover history, promote healing, make connections with others, and take action related to the ongoing, uneven, lived experience and differential possibility horizon with which many are presented with as an accident of birth. While the great migration movements may have offered some measure of release, in the case of African Americans and other people of color in the United States, the lived experience of uneven possibility horizons has persisted, irrespective of geography.

The years have seen many successful shifts in relational patterns, institutional arrangements, and legal parameters that inform the possibility horizons for all

people in the United States. And yet, many still sense a lingering inequality that is socially determined. While there are those who benefit from and seek to maintain the unevenness, there seem to be at least as many – White, Black, and otherwise – who are either uninterested in maintaining inequalities or willing to seek actively to undo them. With so many people concerned about and actively engaged in undoing inequities and with so many people experiencing inequality as a personal and societal burden, the problem persists. Such persistence invites the question: in what ways might space be created for seismic shifts toward the lived experience of fundamental equality to emerge? This larger question preceded my birth by several generations, but I have joined in this inquiry for a substantial portion of my personal and professional life.

The question has become even more pressing, as, through visiting many other countries and cultures, I have noticed a recurring theme: a historical legacy of cultural inequity is enforced or reinforced through relational, institutional, and legal means that reproduces itself over multiple generations, even when a substantial portion of the population wishes to undo it and even works to do so. While the research I am presenting here is based on my work among African Americans, whites, Latinos, and those of Middle Eastern descent residing in a mid-sized town in the Southern United States, the constructionist aspect of the principles can be contextualized and applied across many contexts without substantial modification.

I use the metaphor of "journey" to situate the progress, setbacks, persistence, and continuation of efforts toward equalizing the perceived and actual extent of agency for all people. In this dissertation, I offer a small, yet hopefully significant, step to signal a possible turn in the journey. I introduce two practice innovations—both methods of dialogue and context –analysis—that can be infused into or substituted for other current practices and approaches in a community context.

In the United States, many Africans and African Americans have embodied the journey metaphor by moving from one part of the country to another in search of a context that supports their pursuit of freedom, full group—and self-expression (Berlin, 2010; Wilkerson, 2010). The journey also refers to evolving theories of race and other aspects of identity from essentialism through structuralism to poststructuralism, and eventually, to a social constructionism. When identity was understood to be an essential, real, and immutable aspect of each person's being,

approaches to achieving equity were designed in accordance with that frame: if the deficient aspects of the people themselves can be improved, then they can be equal to the "good White folks"; the early New England missionaries who came South after the Emancipation Proclamation to establish schools and colleges ascribed to this approach. As understanding of identity shifted to a structuralist framing, approaches to establishing equal lived experiences in society also bridged towards improving relationships and investigating the role of institutions. Several approaches began to consider the role of power from a primarily Marxist/structuralist framing. There are many varied examples of this framing, ranging from civil rights litigation, and nonviolent resistance to cross-boundary immersion programs, dialogue efforts, and cultural education programs. Most of the current practices that seek to respond to these questions have been based in either an essentialist or structuralist framing of race, identity, power, and community. Identity scholarship is now being considered within a new philosophical orientation. Therefore, there are opportunities to transform methods of engagement to reflect the developing scholarship in constructionism with a particular focus on narrative and a currently contested discourse on identity.

In addition to some lingering essentialist assumptions and structuralist approaches, there is also a growing literature of constructionist approaches to identity. Poststructuralist and social constructionist theorizing are contributing to the development of an alternative narrative of identity and of societal structures that may greatly advance efforts toward establishing a fundamentally equal sense of agency in contexts of previously enduring inequalities.

While my original intention was to apply narrative mediation to the context of a society historically divided by a socially constructed category, I soon learned that the tools and practices were not yet developed or well-refined. At this point in the development of narrative scholarship, there is a need for practices, tools, and techniques that introduce constructionist principles, and specifically narrative practices, into the work of community engagement especially when seeking to establish fundamentally equal possibility horizons for all people.

1.1 What I Will Study and How

I engage in participatory action research as opposed to more neutral and observational methods because I am interested in methods that are actively involved

in changing community conditions. In communities that have experienced generational inequality across a socially constructed dividing practice like race, or, ethnicity, or religion, and so on, I am particularly interested in the reorienting of those communities such that those social constructions are interesting and informative but neither predictive nor determinative of the quality of any person's lived experience. Towards that end, my larger research question is: can constructionism, and particularly narrative practices grounded in constructionist philosophical assumptions contribute to the radical transformation of communities towards full inclusion and equitably experienced landscapes of possibility? This current study is presumably the first of many I will undertake to address that larger question.

1.1.1 A brief outline of the method of inquiry.

The results of narrative inquiry are often presented in narrative formats (Riessman, 1993). This thesis is presented in narrative form to reflect the narrative nature of the inquiry and also to represent the journey of discovery I was involved in during the course of this study. My methodology involved becoming invested in and connected to the community through a series of interviews and observations that were not a part of this study. The timing of the convening of the first conversation arose in the flow of community life. The conversational methods I developed were also developed in context; the second conversational method was only developed after the first had been conducted and preliminarily analyzed.

The research is presented in somewhat traditional fashion with the introduction followed by the literature review, a description of the methods and an analysis of the data, and findings. However, I try to emphasize at several points throughout the reporting that the methods themselves were developed intuitively in the context of the community engagement process. Only after the conversations had been facilitated and the data recorded and transcribed did I review the literature to determine how that literature either affirmed or critiqued the work. That being said, the traditional sequence should be quite helpful for readers to understand the processes.

This study introduces two models of community dialogue. The models are being tested to provide an initial assessment of the effectiveness of utilizing methods grounded in constructionism and narrative as the basis for participatory action

research. The models were developed in the qualitative research tradition of *bricolage* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The methods were woven together, crafted in response to the context I experienced in Greensboro, North Carolina, in the fall of 2012. The two specific methods I developed and implemented—narratively modified focused conversations and narrative restorative community conferencing—were woven together drawing on the insights, traditions and practices of focus groups, Freirian emancipatory dialogue, restorative justice, restorative conferencing, narrative inquiry, and collective narrative practice. Each of the methods was used in an evening of community dialogue involving twenty-eight and twenty-two diverse members of the Greensboro community, respectively. The focal point of the two conversations was first a play *Trouble in Mind* by Alice Childress, which had been produced by the local theater company, the Triad Stage. Most of the participants had attended a performance of the play on the night before the first conversation. I facilitated the first conversation, which was recorded on multiple audio and video recording devices. The recordings were then transcribed. The second conversation occurred in response to a clear request from the large majority of participants in the first conversation. The model for the second conversation was also established intuitively in response to the community context as I experienced it. The dialogue design was established with the intention of introducing constructionist principles and narrative mediation practices into a larger participatory action process. I also facilitated the second conversation, which was also recorded on multiple audio and video recording devices and transcribed. The recording, description, and analysis are concluded after the two dialogue processes were completed. The participatory action aspect of the project continued for more than twelve month after the sessions reported in this study. The participatory action phase resulted in participants from this project designing and—at the time of this report—beginning to implement a community-wide dialogic engagement model to address an issue and an institution which is closely aligned with many concerns about uneven experiences in communities based on race, ethnicity and citizenship status.

There are two domains for analysis for the data generated in these processes—the methods themselves and the narrative content produced by the dialogue models. The methods and the process of their development were assessed using Turnbull's (2002) eight-stage model of theory-building for social construction and Riessman's

(1993; 2008) assessment of internal coherence in narrative inquiry. The content was analyzed using a model derived from Foucault's (1994) conceptualization of power/knowledge with consideration for how the *granular communication model* helps to understand the content and guide the facilitation.

The use of granular communications as an explanatory device is also somewhat out of sequence. Granular communications is a model that emerged in the mode of grounded theory inquiry during the iterative process of analyzing the first conversation to develop an inquiry model for the second. The emerging granular communications model helped to guide the facilitation of the second concept and served as an explanatory frame for the content of both conversations.

1.2 The Research Questions

Questions that were of great interest to me in this study were

a. Can narrative principles and practices be used effectively to reconceptualize a previously existing dialogue model that was based on positivist and structuralist principles?
b. Can narrative mediation principles and practices be adapted to a larger community context in a manner that supports a radically transformative community action agenda?
c. Can dialogue models be developed for use at the community level that are: grounded in constructionism; infused with narrative mediation principles and practices; able to articulate and deconstruct dominant and alternative community narratives; and produce a novel and accessible community analysis that can serve as the basis for a radically transformative community action agenda?
d. Do such models (described in a, b, and c above), if developed and effective, contribute to either the deconstruction of conflict-saturated narratives; the decompression of compressed narratives; discursive position shifts; or the identification of increased openings for action?
e. Is Foucault's conceptualization of power/ knowledge useful as a framework for analysis of community dynamics, particularly in communities with compressed and conflict-saturated narratives?

1.3 A Brief Summary of Findings

This study demonstrates that social constructionism is valuable for collective community engagement work, especially with communities experiencing longstanding inequities. In order to develop radically transformative action agendas,

the community analysis process should address conflict-saturated and compressed narratives. The principles and practices of narrative mediation, when structured for collective application, can assist communities by externalizing the problematics, mapping the effects of the narratives and deconstructing the discursive components of those narratives. The two models of community engagement introduced for this study are shown to be effective in narrating community problematics, externalizing the problem, mapping its effects, and identifying alternatives for action. The models also demonstrate that Foucault's (1994) conceptualization of power/knowledge and his framework for analysis of relations of power are well-suited for community analysis. Without having exposure to the Foucault framing, the community's analysis and narration of both the dominant and preferred narratives is tightly aligned with Foucault. It is also shown that the emerging theory of granular communication shows promise both for its explanatory value and as guidance for inquiry for counselors, mediators, and possibly trial lawyers.

1.4 Flow of the Dissertation

In **Chapter I**, I describe my personal journey as a *bricoleur* and describe how my work has been joined to the great cloud of witnesses creating the spaces for change in support of what has to date been a perpetual migration towards equitable possibility horizons. **Chapter II** offers a review of the literature and scholarship that undergird the entire project. I originally situate the work inside a social constructionist philosophical framing as first articulated by Berger and Luckmann (1966) and then expanded upon by Vivien Burr (2003), Ken and Mary Gergen (K. Gergen, 2009; Gergen & Gergen, 2003) and many of their colleagues, some of whom are associated with the Taos Institute. I am particularly drawn to Michel Foucault's conceptualizations of discourse, subjectivity, and power (1978; 1980); Judith Butler's conceptualization of performativity and the role of power in subjectivity and identity formation (1997); Michael White's and David Epston's (1990), John Winslade's and Gerald Monk's (Monk & Winslade, 2013; Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997) and Sara Cobb's (2013) conceptualizations of the role and power of narrativity to frame and transform conflicts; and finally, Hilde Lindemann Nelson's (2001) offerings on the roles of narrative in identity formation and reformation. Many of the metaphors derived from a constructionist perspective and described in Chapter II

have contributed to new tools and techniques, some of which I draw on for the development of my inquiry.

Chapter III is also a literature review that is primarily focused on the methods of facilitation. In Chapter III, I also present my emerging conceptualization of "granular communications." This is my first attempt to synthesize the insights of Butler, Cobb, Winslade, and Foucault with an emphasis on practical approaches to narrative, unveiling embedded relations of power, and, ultimately, shifting discursive positions.

Discursive positioning is a construct that describes how people are related to a particular narrative. "Every story offers people positions to take up in relation to each other" (Winslade & Monk, 2001, p. 72). Positioning does not arise from the story being told, but, rather, positioning is embedded in the various discourses that the narrative draws on. When someone frames a narrative with reference to particular discourse, he or she is said to offer the other person a *position call*. If the person takes up that position—or accepts the position call—that will in many ways define the range of available responses or actions a person can make and the ways that her or his actions can be understood. When discourses are embedded with inequity, reflexive and culturally-determined relational patterns draw on these discourses and routinely offer position calls of inequity that produce, reproduce, and stabilize both the inequities and the discourses themselves.

Taking the concepts of discursive positioning and the metaphors of journey and possibility horizon together, Haslebo (2008) describes the need for shifting positions as it relates to agency and equality:

> The horizon in the landscape is the borderline between what exists and what does not exist – as seen from where I stand. Only what I can see exists in my immediate perception. It is a challenge to comprehend that the horizon and what is visible to me is determined by my position, as my position is not visible to me. I cannot experience but only assume on a theoretical level that my position determines my perspective on the landscape. And I can guess that if I move away from my position, my perspective will change. It is difficult to imagine what will then be visible to me. Believing that the landscape will look more beautiful or be more passable will entice me to move. (p. 1)

The question then is raised which methods are productive in inviting or clearing the way for shifting positions and creating new openings for action. Granular communications is a model that I advance as an explanatory and analytical framework for understanding the role of discourse and positioning in communication patterns. It also gives guidance for facilitators, counselors, mediators, and the like who seek to unveil the role of discourse in the communications process. *Granular communications* is derived from Foucault's (1972; 1982; 1994) conceptualizations of power/knowledge and discourse; Althusser's (1971) doctrine of interpellation; and Butler's (1988; 1997; 2009) conceptualization of performativity.

While persistently uneven possibility horizons exist throughout the planet, for the purpose of testing and presentation, I am drawing on work I am involved with in Greensboro, North Carolina. I was originally in Greensboro as a co-investigator to consider the role of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (GTRC) in shaping the narrative of race and race relations in that community. As I describe more fully later in this chapter, that study of the GTRC transitioned through the process described in this study into a larger participatory action effort. This study describes the process and dialogue methods that I implemented as a bridge between the earlier study of the GTRC and the later participatory process.

Chapter IV describes the methodology that I developed for dialogue in Greensboro. The two tools that I developed are 1) narratively-modified focused conversation, and 2) narrative restorative community conferencing. I used these dialogue methods to support the community in the development of an analysis of the relations of power that shape and inform the community dynamics. While these tools draw from or modify earlier practices, they are distinct and innovative in the sense that they introduce narrative principles and infuse Butler's insights on performance and performativity and Cobb's narrative compression. **Chapters V and VI** analyze the implementation and facilitation of the methods. I was particularly concerned with whether the development process was appropriate for creating new tools that build on social constructionism. To assess the appropriateness of my process I consider Turnbull's (2002) eight-stage process for social construction theory building. I also assess the measures based on Riessman's (1993) values of internal coherence for narrative inquiry. In addition to the analysis of the method's

development, **Chapter VII** analyzes the content produced by the two dialogue methods to determine the extent to which the methods contributed to the production of an analysis of the Greensboro community context that would be useful for future action.

This study occurred as part of a journey. Often in a journey experience, the tool you need will emerge at the time you need it. In fact, the hallmark of the bricolage method is that the tools for inquiry should emerge from the context of concern (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 8). Throughout the process, the circumstances—which can also be described as the material available for construction—informed the ways that the next steps emerged. The reporting of this work shows that there was neither a preconceived structure for the investigation, nor a predetermined method of analysis of what emerged as data. This model of engagement necessarily demands a methodological approach that determines the need and approach in response to the moment and not in a scripted or predetermined manner. Such an approach also requires a fluid approach to data-gathering and analysis. This approach to research methodology, data collection, and analysis is described in emerging qualitative research literature as bricolage (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), which is how I characterize both the methodological and analytical aspects of this work.

Because the development of the tools is a small step in a longer journey, Chapter VIII lays out in the form of preliminary conclusions my learnings to this point, remaining questions, and possible test applications for continued tool development and refinement. Community engagement, conflict transformation, peacebuilding, and similar fields are often described as *practices*. There is a saying that, "Practice makes perfect." Practice will only improve our capacity to do what we are doing. My intention in proposing new tools of practice is to align more closely with new philosophical stances with the hope that practicing from a fresh perspective will assist communities to see with fresh eyes and to generate a renewed sense of possibility.

Because I believe all meaning is made in a process of co-action, readers will have the opportunity, and even the responsibility, to test the ideas presented herein. So, now may we begin …?

1.5 Journey Toward a Question

> *"I am writing on this subject because I do not know yet what to think about it."*[1]

The question in my dissertation has been forming since "before I was formed in the belly of my mother's womb."[2] The general question that my life has embodied is "What would it take to shift the experience of Africans in America (and by implication, the experience of everyone else whom they encounter) such that they are equally as likely as their European (Asian, Latino, First Nation) counterparts to have a high quality of life with shared possibility and opportunity for successes in the areas of work, education, health, justice, and family life?" I have pursued this question from a variety of intellectual and practical approaches for more than twenty-five years. I believe I have now entered a portal for world viewing that substantially advances my inquiry and responds to the limitations of all previous approaches I have tried. This dissertation is a narration of a brief piece of the journey.

There is a colloquial expression, offered often in the form of a proverb, to the effect that, "A clear answer is embedded in an effective question." Therefore, while my general question persists, for the purpose of deep exploration, the question must be refined and narrowed. On the way to arriving at a more refined question, I will accomplish five tasks that situate my journey. First, I describe selected components of my personal narrative that I perceive as having contributed to the origin and persistence of the questions. Secondly, I present my educational experiences as a specific thread of my social location. I assert that it is both the varied context and settings and also the disciplines that I pursued that gave new language and metaphors by which to approach the question, and yet ultimately proved unsatisfactory. Thirdly, I describe the professional experiences and private social pursuits that have reinforced the continuing relevance of the question. Fourthly, I distill the lessons learned and present the current version of a refined question—the subject of this dissertation. Fifthly and finally, I will describe the twists and turns that landed me in Greensboro with the beautiful people who participated in my

[1] This is a paraphrase of a quote attributed to Michel Foucault when he was asked to describe his writing process. (Foucault, 1980)
[2] Jer. 1:5 (New International Version)

inquiry, briefly describe the relationships within the group assembled, and outline the facilitative methodology I used.

As a last foundational piece before undertaking the five tasks just outlined, it is important to introduce a few social constructionist concepts to ground why I have chosen to situate the entirety of my research inside my personal journey. The same concepts explain why the research has implications far beyond the particularity of my own experience.

1.6 A Brief Encounter with Social Construction

A primary tenet of social constructionist theory is that all meaning is made and refined in and through relationships (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen & Gergen, 2003). This does not deny the existence of any aspect of reality. It is simply to say that what we call and know to be *reality* is only given meaning in patterns of relatedness and through the co-action of those that encounter it in nexus with the many meanings that have been established at earlier points and transmitted through time in symbol, folklore, mythology, and other narrative forms. Also, each person is born into a network of relationships and exposed to a set of conversations, circumstances, and experiences that provide the foundation for his or her individual meaning-making practices. Much of the meaning that people make of their experiences is transmitted to them inside the matrix of historical discourses that they occupy (family, culture, community, nation, and so on). Each set of lived experiences that a person has potentially exposes her or him to other people, institutions, or cultural practices and other discourses. Those interactions with other discursive trajectories and narratives either align with and confirm his or her discursive orientation or in some way shift or challenge the dominant narratives and metaphors that orient that person's life.

The discussion of my social location is offered to help the reader appreciate or try to imagine how I may have arrived at some of my personal meanings. In what contexts were my interpretive patterns formed? What are the varieties of experiences and disciplines that I might draw on in scaffolding the meaning I am making in the moment? In describing my own social location, I begin with the assertion that my meaning-making processes are framed by the meaning-making processes of those who provided my early socialization.

"Every child's journey begins as a quest to resolve the unanswered questions of the parents." James Redfield, *The Celestine Prophecy*

1.7 Social Location

I am an African American male born in the (yet-to-be) United States in the late 1950s. This was a turbulent time in the United States that included postwar suburbanization, the pinnacle of the Civil Rights Movement, significant migration among southern Blacks, and the national discourse on integration, among many other major political currents. Some of my first memories were an entanglement of all four of these cultural phenomena. I did not participate in the primary Civil Rights activities, such as the marches, boycotts, and counter sit-ins, that took place in the 1950s and 1960s. The primary narrative given to me about my family's relationship to this period was that, since both of my parents were deeply embedded in socializing institutions in our community (law enforcement and education), any activity by my older siblings and cousins would have been considered a threat to their livelihood. Even though family members and I did not actively participate in the Civil Rights struggles through sit-ins, marches, or any other aspect of the protest traditions that formed the primary narration of that era, my life has been greatly influenced by that history.

The primary narrative offered to me as a young person was that the "*possibility landscape*"[3] existed for me—many opportunities were available to me that had not been available to members of any earlier generation of African Americans. This possibility landscape existed and was said to have increased as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. However, there were several paths that one could follow to take advantage of this new range of possibility—involvement/agitation, encounter/ assimilation, or freedom in isolation. The choice of paths for my life actually started even before I was born.

1.7.1 Parents.

Both of my parents were born, raised, and received their K-12 education in the 1930s and 1940s in Moultrie, Georgia, a small, segregated town in the southern United States in the southeastern portion of the state. Each of my parents themselves

[3] "Possibility landscape" is a metaphorical phrase with special resonance for me. This is to my knowledge not a quote, but my own understanding of the primary question of my life: what seeds can I plant that will improve the possibility landscape for myself and others?

had two parents, neither of whom was a college, or even high school, graduate. However, both sets of my grandparents were simultaneously working class and owning class people. In addition to working in fields and local factories, my father's parents owned and managed a plot of land and operated a small community corner store. My maternal grandfather worked in the local meatpacking plants, and he also owned several automobiles through which he operated a taxi service that employed several men in the community and provided transportation to many of the domestic and other workers in the area.

After high school, my father served in the military during the U.S.-Korea conflict. Both of my parents went to colleges that were part of the public and private, but segregated, historically Black college and university systems.[4] Each of my parents chose to pursue professions in socializing institutions—policing and teaching—that at the time were consciously and by rule involved in establishing and reproducing the racially determined hierarchical societal opportunity structures. Both education and law enforcement had the paradoxical positioning of being avenues for personal and community uplift, while, at the same time, both of these institutions were integrally involved in the repression of African Americans, especially in the southern United States. The story that my parents tell is that when it was clear that success in their chosen professions would require them to conform to the strongly held societal views of race and class that were the dominant narrative of the southern United States, they chose instead to move north to Cincinnati, Ohio. In narrative language, "they refused a societal position call" (Winslade & Monk, 2001, p. 72).

My parents' move north could be understood inside the larger societal discursive context of the great migration as described by Isabel Wilkerson's *Warmth of Other Suns* (2010) and Ira Berlin's *Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (2010). Wilkerson describes African Americans' pursuit of freedom in this way:

> From the early years of the twentieth century to well past its middle age, nearly every black family in the American South, which meant nearly every black family in America, had a decision to make. There were sharecroppers losing at settlement. Typists wanting to work in an office. Yard boys scared

[4] My father at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and my mother at Paine College in Augusta, Georgia.

> that a single gesture near the planter's wife could leave them hanging from an oak tree. They were all stuck in a caste system as hard and as unyielding as the red Georgia clay, and they each had a decision before them. In this they were not unlike anyone who ever longed to cross the Atlantic or the Rio Grande …
>
> During this time, a good portion of all Black Americans alive picked up and left the tobacco farms of Virginia, the rice plantations of South Carolina, cotton fields in east Texas and Mississippi, and the villages and backwoods of the remaining southern states — Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, and by some measures, Oklahoma. They set out for cities they had whispered among themselves or had seen in a mail-order catalogue. Some came straight from the field with their King James Bibles and old twelve-string guitars. Still more were townspeople looking to be their fuller selves, tradesmen following their customers, pastors trailing their flocks …
>
> "Oftentimes, just to go away," wrote John Dollard, a Yale scholar studying the south in the 1930s, "is one of the most aggressive things that another person can do and if the means of expressing discontent are limited, as in this case, it is one of the few ways in which pressure can be put …"
>
> "It was a folk movement of incalculable moment…"
>
> And more than that, it was the first big step the nation's servant class ever took without asking.

(Wilkerson, 2010, pp. 8-11)

1.7.2 Cincinnati.

Cincinnati, Ohio, is the first city "north of the Mason-Dixon line."[5] In popular imagination, this line was the dividing line north of states that adhered to and strongly reinforced the racialized hierarchy first established through enslavement

[5] I now realize that this concept is no longer as well-known as it once was (nor does it have universal significance), nor does it evoke the same emotive and historical resonance as it once did, so it probably requires some description. In popular usage, especially after the Missouri Compromise of 1820 (apparently the first official use of the term "Mason's and Dixon's Line"), the Mason–Dixon Line symbolized a cultural boundary between the Northeastern United States and the Southern United States (Dixie). As a result, it also established the geographic demarcation for legality of slavery, although the Missouri Compromise Line had a much more definitive geographic connection to slavery in the United States leading up to the Civil War (see *geography.about.com/od/politicalgeography/a/**masondixon**.htm)*

and later through Reconstruction[6], Jim Crow[7], and the Black Codes[8]. While many aspects of Cincinnati were still relatively restrictive, it seemed to be a city that presented opportunities and was open to "the other."[9] Cincinnati hosted a large Jewish population, a substantial German and Polish immigrant contingent, a growing African American community, and a number of poor Whites, who had come out of the Appalachian Mountains. Later Cincinnati became a refugee resettlement area for both Southeast Asians and Central Americans fleeing violent political conflicts in their home regions. The folklore of the city also boasted that Cincinnati had "more millionaires per capita than any city in the world other than Zurich, Switzerland". So for many people in my neighborhood, our collective existence included stories of journey, migration, and searching both for a new homeland and a sense of freedom and equality. In a manner of speaking, I was born into the land of the question of this dissertation.

1.7.2.1 Where and how I lived.

I have no personal memory of the first four years of my life. During that time, we lived in a publicly (that is, government) subsidized housing development behind the Cincinnati Zoo. From what I was told the residents were largely, if not totally, African American, and they were certainly all poor. Soon we migrated to a suburb. The community that I remember growing up in was a multiracial semi-suburban community with a fully integrated (race and class) educational experience. My block included Black, Jewish, and White[10] families. The parents' work ranged from being

---

[6] http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aaohtml/exhibit/aopart5.html

[7] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Crow_laws -- Quoting from the Wikipedia website: "The **Jim Crow laws** were state and local laws in the United States enacted between 1876 and 1965. They mandated *de jure* racial segregation in all public facilities in Southern states of the former Confederacy, with, starting in 1890, a "separate but equal" status for African Americans. The separation in practice led to conditions for African Americans that tended to be inferior to those provided for white Americans, systematizing a number of economic, educational and social disadvantages. *De jure* segregation mainly applied to the Southern United States. Northern segregation was generally *de facto*, with patterns of segregation in housing enforced by covenants, bank lending practices, and job discrimination, including discriminatory union practices for decades. Some examples of Jim Crow laws are the segregation of public schools, public places, and public transportation, and the segregation of restrooms, restaurants, and drinking fountains for Whites and Blacks. The U.S. military was also segregated."

[8] http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Black+Codes

[9] This is all clearly the retelling of oral tradition and textually mediated restatements of social history.

[10] I will use these descriptive conventions throughout even though I recognize that they are each socially constructed concepts and that there are embedded relations of power when these are used individually and especially when they are placed in juxtaposition to one another.

teachers, doctors, college professors, elected officials, and school administrators, to small business owners, garbage collectors, judges, plumbers, and craftsmen. There were also multiracial marriages, and the children of those unions were among my friends and colleagues.

1.7.3 School Days.

My elementary school was an experimental program in terms both of demographic composition and curricular advances. The school's district lines were intentionally drawn in ways to include children from disparate communities. The student body was an almost equal mix of African Americans, Jews, and both rich and poor Whites. Later, an apartment complex was built in the school district to house both Southeast Asian and Central American refugees fleeing conflicts in other parts of the world. I can remember some early protests about building the apartments, but I now imagine the protest was more about who would occupy the apartments, as opposed to the deviation from single family homes.

Listening to the journey stories of my Southeast Asian and Central American friends was my first conscious exposure to racial/ethnic and ideological conflict on a global scale. In addition to the already present racial and class diversity within my neighborhood, my mother was actively involved in welcoming teachers and their families from other countries to Cincinnati. As a result, I had experiences of friends and family associates from Israel/Palestine, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Germany, each with their own stories of identity and journey.

1.7.3.1 Walnut Hills High School (WHHS) - The declaration of an equal possibility horizon.

I attended the "college preparatory" magnet public high school for the city. All children in the city tested their college aptitude in the 6th grade, and the top testing members of 6th grade were invited to attend Walnut Hills. Because I had attended an experimental college prep elementary school, most of my classmates tested into Walnut Hills. From what I know now of the ways that education systems often reproduce socially constructed hierarchies (Giroux, 2002), it is surprising (but at the

time unremarkable to me) that WHHS was also quite diverse in terms of race, class, and city geography.[11]

My social interactions during my days at North Avondale Elementary and Walnut Hills High established both personal expectation and a narrative frame regarding the role of race and class in society,[12] namely, that race and class were not as significant as intellect, character, discipline, and skills in determining the likelihood of success in life.

1.7.3.2 Summering in Moultrie.

While I was fully enveloped in the narrative being constructed and performed for me in my little corner of Cincinnati, each summer I visited my parents' hometown, Moultrie, Georgia, with all of my siblings and cousins. In Moultrie, I was regularly invited to consider a different dominant narrative. In Moultrie, the social order was still constructed around values that resulted in race and class separation, with very structured rules of engagement and with quite limited horizons and possibilities for African Americans. This narrative was for me a view from "the Old South". The Moultrie narrative had limited influence on my own personal narrative, but was certainly instrumental in the formation of my questions for life. I might more accurately say that the Moultrie narrative had significant influence in this way: while I did not personally adopt or accept it as real or true, I could see even at a young age the impact that it had on those who did adopt it. In that way, resistance to the Moultrie narrative greatly influenced my life's trajectory.

1.7.4 Higher education and the journey to the question: The intersection of personal context and intellectual disciplines

1.7.4.1 Morehouse College.

When I left WHHS and Cincinnati, I was in for an awakening about the power of dominant narratives: I attended Morehouse College, in Atlanta, Georgia. Morehouse is the only all-male, predominantly African-American (99.95%) college in the country. The lore or myth of the "Morehouse Man" is that of an African American

[11] When I arrived at Walnut Hills with so many of my friends from North Avondale Elementary, we were surprised to learn that most of the city of Cincinnati was, in fact, very segregated by race and class.

[12] Looking back through a different lens, I realize that this was an intentionally framed narrative not shared by (or shared with) others in my age cohort in other sections of the city who did not attend Walnut Hills, and certainly not shared in other parts of the country. This made my framing of the world more obviously a framing rather than "the truth." This was my first appreciation of how a worldview shapes a person's possibilities landscape.

man distinguished by his intellect and the aura of his presence.[13] The college's grand narrative is one of exceptionalism as the pathway to success. This sentiment is captured in a well-worn and oft-repeated line in the college president's orientation speech for incoming students: "Look to your left. Now look to your right. Now look at yourself. Two of the three men you just looked at will not make it to graduation day … at least not at Morehouse College!" Another part of the dominant narrative of Morehouse is informed by the origins of the school in the segregated South where some "good Christian (read 'White') folks" were "willing" to start a school for the education and "uplift" of the recently emancipated Negro. The school's history also inadvertently reinforces the embedded power dynamics of race relations through the stories of struggle and survival and the mythology/folklore of what leads to success in "this White man's world": "being twice as good, twice as smart, better prepared, and STILL needing to persevere!"

At Morehouse, I majored in biology and psychology. During that period, there was a significant (I originally wrote "major") upheaval in the Psychology Department. According to popular tales about the origins of the upheaval, the college administration was following a request from a large philanthropic institution to change the focus of the psychology curriculum from its current emphasis on "Black (social) Psychology" towards a more scientific/clinical (read "acceptable and mainstream employable") approach to the discipline. The turmoil in the Psychology Department involved the dismissal or transfer of several of the primary scholars of Black Psychology, including the demotion of the departmental chair and one of the most popular and engaging professors, Naim Akbar, a leader in the field of Black Psychology (Akbar, 1998). Dr. Akbar was replaced in the department chair position by a Jewish woman whose scholarship focused on rat research and other modes of experimental and behavioral psychology. This might not have been a significant occurrence in the larger academic world, but in the context of the only all-male, historically Black, college in the country, this move signaled a significant and, for many, including myself, regrettable shift. One interpretation is that the administration was encouraging assimilation as opposed to self-definition.

[13] Morehouse Men are said to drink from five (5) wells: 'well-read', 'well–spoken', 'well-travelled', 'well-dressed', and 'well-balanced'. A popular refrain is that "you can tell a Morehouse Man, but you can't tell him much!!"

The different pathways for pursuit and taking advantage of the possibility landscape were placed in stark contrast: isolation, or at least self-definition through African-centered social and community psychology, or assimilation through traditional clinical and psychobiological framings. At the time, my experience told me that "assimilation" was a required reality as opposed to a worldview choice or simply a metaphor. Fortunately, even as we were introduced to the supposedly scientific and clinical perspective, some of our professors were intent on warning us about the embedded biases in the research and clinical work. Before we read any clinical psychology text, the first two books we were assigned were *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1962) and *Even the Rat Was White: A Historical View of Psychology* (Guthrie, 1976). This was, unbeknownst to me at the time, my first introduction to social constructionism, and the ideas resonated with me deeply.

Black or African-centered psychology was primarily focused on highlighting the racial biases operating in mainstream clinical and social psychology and developing theoretical and practical frameworks both to counteract the damage and to present more culturally appropriate models of engagement. Among the many concepts of Black psychology that fascinated and resonated deeply with me was the concept of "mentacide". The late Bobby E. Wright (pbuh), a mental health practitioner, leader in the Black psychology field, and social activist in Cook County (Chicago) Illinois, defined "mentacide" as "the systematic destruction of a group of people's minds with the ultimate aim being the complete extirpation of the race" (Wright, 1979). Another concept that informed my understanding of the pathology of assimilation was Akbar's alien-self disorder (Akbar, 1998; Belgrave & Allison, 2009).

1.7.4.2 Washington University.

After Morehouse, I continued the study of Black psychology, seeking models of engagement that allowed people, specifically African Americans and people with urban experiences who were expressing clinically labeled symptoms to be empowered in their engagements in society. My research considered questions of agency (described as "locus of control") and racial identity. The physical context for this study was also informative — the Minority Mental Health program, while part of the psychology department, was in a stand-alone, otherwise non-descript brick building several blocks from the main campus. The program's director often described the isolation that we experienced as the University Administration's

response to our resistance to mainstream ideas. While at Washington University in St. Louis, I was also introduced to the clinical social work teaching of Dr. Elaine Pinderhughes, who, quite radically at the time, described "empowerment" as a clinical therapeutic approach (Pinderhughes, 1989) appropriate for the situations of marginalized populations. While the work of both Wright and Pinderhughes has influenced my understanding of the role of power in addressing issues of race, both of them have a limiting notion of power, and both stopped short of where I think the conversation or investigation must go to have significant societal effects.

I remained convinced that mainstream psychology was inadequate for addressing the concerns of African Americans, primarily because of the upper middle class Eurocentric context in which it had been developed and tested. However, I was also skeptical that any purely clinical model, even with culturally specific and appropriate methodologies of Black or African-centered psychology or social work, would be able to provide any substantial measure of redress.

In most clinical models, there is a focus on individual behavior, thought, and action, and a tendency to dismiss, overlook, or even deny the structural and institutional barriers that a person faces. In fact, many psychological studies "control for" race and gender and class (i.e., the most interesting aspects) and then produce results at the .05 level of significance (i.e., triviality) as a way of diminishing or denying the significant aspects of the construction. A clinical approach often suggests that if the personality issues are addressed, people will relate more effectively to their circumstances, and that those circumstances position all people equally for personal success. While changing the way people express anger or depression, for example, the clinician is generally not focused on the possibility that situations and institutions responded to with anger and depression are circumstances that themselves are demeaning, limiting, or even unsafe.

Further, the clinical model looks at individuals or at family units. The sources of the anger and depression are often, in fact, built into societal organizational structures that have an embedded violence which, while constructed impersonally, are often experienced personally. For instance, a young girl who, in her culture, by virtue of her gender identification, is denied an education and is prohibited from equal access to food and gainful employment, will experience this personally, even though the structures were established as part of a cultural narrative most likely long

before she was born, with no consideration of her personal gifts, wishes, or abilities. In such an instance, clinical approaches might help manage her emotional and psychological reaction to the culture and might even help her establish a skill set to maneuver better within these circumstances. Yet the societal/cultural/political changes needed to transform the situation are far beyond the scope of clinical practice concerns and often not recognized as being necessary or significant to the person's lived experiences. I was convinced that such broader concerns needed to be addressed in order to improve population outcomes. I am also persuaded that seeking to improve one individual's chances at a time is not only daunting, but foolhardy.

1.7.4.3 Additional graduate and professional studies.

Over the years since Washington University, I have also studied law, public health policy, public finance and administration, and theology. Each discipline has offered a framework, a set of tools or practices, and metaphors that expand my view and understanding of what is required to make substantial and sustainable societal-level shifts in the mechanisms of inequity. I was especially keen on liberation theology as described by Gutierrez (2001), Boff and Boff (1986), Cone (1970), and Hood (1990). Yet, I had a nagging sense that each framework had significant limitations. The first sense of such limitations arose from the fact that law, policy, government, economics, and theology were socializing institutions that presented the possibility and ideals of empowerment and liberation, and yet these same institutional structures and values frameworks had historically been used as mechanisms of control for the repression and marginalization of the same people. So while I operated in those arenas professionally for more than twenty years, I continued to look for alternatives.

1.8 Formulating a Question

In summary, I have a complex narrative that has involved being exposed to a set of competing narratives on race relations in the United States. I have had the opportunity to consider racial inequity through multiple frames, including psychological, legal, policy, and religious. Among the many questions raised are:

- What are the limitations, if any, of various "clinical" approaches to race and race relations?

- Why are various policy approaches unavailing in creating wholesale shifts in racialized experiences in the US? (Why is racialized and racially coded language still a staple of certain political movements?)
- What, if anything, do the metaphorical frameworks in law, theology, and/or psychology add to the cause of creating wholesale shifts in racialized experiences in the US?
- Recognizing the paradox embedded in the idea of using frameworks that have been applied for both oppression and liberation, are there natural or certain limits to the possible contributions that such intellectual and practical frameworks can make towards the establishment of societies where all experience fundamental equal possibility horizons?

1.8.1 Four primary approaches to equalizing possibility horizons.

For more than twenty-five years I have engaged in a variety of efforts to address issues of racial disparity and prejudice in the United States. While project approaches have varied, the stated ideals were similar: ending the inequitable experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in the United States, and overcoming barriers and divisions in communities seeming to track along lines of race, ethnicity, religion, gender performance, and gender preference in relationships. Each of the approaches I have participated in, or witnessed and evaluated, could be categorized as based in *coercion*, *connection*, *education*, or *healing*. In chapter II I describe each method in more depth.

My experience with a variety of methods within each of the above-named approaches has ultimately been unsatisfying. Although not always evident, some systemic changes (major or minor, local or national) may have occurred as a result of individual participation in these programs. Sometimes, but certainly not always, participants reported improved relations and expressions of personal satisfaction. What was always left, it seems to me, was an unchanged, even stabilized set of beliefs and values as well as an institutional status quo in the mechanisms and models of relating tending towards inequity.

In the cases where shifts did seem to occur, they were not sustained, which means the conditions for a permanent shift had not been established with sufficient momentum to result in substantial perspective or institutional shifts. In other words, in the case of relational engagement models, people often do feel better about unchanged circumstances; in the case of coercive power models, however, levels of

frustration and desperation at the seeming intransigence of the mechanics of inequity and the "racists" that enforced them often increase, yet the power relations do not seem to change.

1.8.2 My early work in the field.

I have been a mediator for more than thirty years. I have helped individuals, organizations, communities, congregations, and even nations resolve immediate conflicts and have sought to help shift multigenerational conflicts at the family, community, and international levels. I have mediated the resolution of many public policy conflicts involving post-riot racial reconciliation, environmental "justice," regulatory development and resource allocation (parks, art, health care and social services, and security). Many resolutions even resulted in substantial systems change. What was less intentional or in most cases absent was any effort to shift the background discourse that made many of the situations understandable, and even predictable.

The following is one example of mediation where there was systems change but no intention given to shifting background discourse: in 1986, at the conclusion of the National Baseball League's World Series, there was a disturbance on the campus of the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. It originated with taunting and teasing between and among students who were divided between supporters of the Boston Red Sox and supporters of the New York Mets. At some point during a night of rivalry and revelry after the final game of the series, the taunting and teasing between fans of different teams shifted to violent exchanges – shouting, blows, property destruction-- but the violence had become cross-racial, with White students fighting with students who identified as African American, Latino, and Cape Verdean. There ensued over the next three weeks violent cross-racial skirmishes of escalating intensity, with potential for significant property damage and loss of life. When both the front and rear doors of a campus fraternity house, where approximately twenty-five African American men lived, were soaked in gasoline in an apparently unsuccessful effort to set the house on fire, the University Chancellor was moved to take action.

At the time, I was both a graduate student and a Residence Director at the University. In the four dormitories over which I had responsibility, to advance my interest in mediation, we had replaced the traditional student judicial system with a

mediation practice. When the violent escalation reached its peak, the Chancellor invited two colleagues and me to "do the thing you do with roommates for the entire campus". We undertook a series of smaller and larger dialogues and listening sessions that ultimately led to a campus-wide summit. During the listening process many issues that seemed to be grievances of many different constituencies within the University were identified. Students, faculty, staff, and groundskeepers all had grievances that had in some way been expressed during the period of violent communications.

Ultimately many changes, including the establishment of equal standards for university honors, were made: the previous system had provided academic honors for students of color for achievement at a lower grade point than for White students. Contract terms for groundskeepers were renegotiated, and one particular departmental chair was re-assigned. The process concluded with a two-day, campus-wide festival which featured speeches by Mookie Blaylock and Bill Buckner, the Red Sox and Mets players who had been involved in one of the most memorable and emotion-producing plays during the series, a keynote address by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr., and several unity concerts and other opportunities for cooperation (fun and games, mixed group sports competitions, and faculty and student interactions).

In the end, there seemed to be many positive personal relationship shifts, and there were also some systemic changes and policy shifts. All of this might eventually have led to a shift in the discourse of difference and deficiency concerning the students and staff of color. However, there was no intentional action around the consideration of discourse. What I know now is that if you shift the structures (aftermath) without paying attention to the stories of values and beliefs that institutional arrangements were made to support (legacy), new institutional arrangements and relational patterns will emerge to replace the old ones, still in support of the old value set.

Frustrated by limitations of approaches developed by others, I continued to search for new approaches. I have studied and incorporated many concepts from conflict transformation (Lederach, 2003, 2005; Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Porter, 2010); restorative justice (Zehr, 2002), trauma healing (Mollica, 2006; Yoder, 2005) strategic peacebuilding (Schirch, 2004); and art and theatre (Boal, 2000; Cahill & Halpern, 1990; Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Schirch, 2004). Ultimately, my

continued dissatisfaction, in synchronicity with an opportunity, allowed me to make my own first articulation of what I imagined would be a more comprehensive approach.

1.8.3 Transforming historical harms.

CTTT and Transforming Historical Harms… a good start but not quite.

For five years, 2007-2012, I worked with a project that came to be called "*Coming to the T.A.B.L.E. (Taking America Beyond the Legacy of Enslavement)*" (CTTT). CTTT started out as an effort to connect people who had a shared - we said "linked" - history. The original participants were descendants of the former enslaved and former enslavers from the same plantation systems who sought to connect in the service of sharing and learning more of their history, building relationships, and healing from the mutual traumas of the guilt and shame of their families' involvement in the institutional practices of human enslavement. The foundational metaphors for understanding our work were generated through the lens of cultural trauma. As the basis for our initial work, we used the Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR) program (www.emu.edu/cjp/star), which *was* originally developed in the wake of the "traumagenic" events of September 11, 2001. I had had the opportunity to help refine and deliver the STAR program over the seven years preceding the launch of CTTT. Drawing from the STAR framework of truth, justice, mercy, and peace, we developed four pillars for CTTT's work: *history, healing, connection, and action*. As Director of Research and Training for CTTT, I was tasked with developing both the theoretical and practical framework for the people who were actively involved with the group and also write a manual for anyone who shared the vision. The CTTT model I ultimately crafted used a variety of narrative approaches to form four pillars. While, the concept of narrative that we described in CTTT did not draw from or introduce constructionist principles, and the understanding of power was still an essentialist and structural notion of power, this became an early introduction for me for the role of language and the work that is done through narrative.

The manual that was written was *Transforming Historical Harms* (Hooker & Czjakowski, 2013). In the manual, my co-author, Amy Potter Czjakowski, and I sought to synthesize the various approaches of history, healing, connection, and action. I also introduced three new concepts – "traumagenic" events, "legacy," and

"aftermath" (pp. 14-15) - designed to address the background and systemic residue that perpetuates inequality. This framework, described in more depth in Chapter II, came much closer to addressing many of my earlier concerns. I began to recognize an embedded limitation of the articulation of that approach, which quickly propelled me to my current inquiry.

As the Director of Research and Training for CTTT and primary author of *Transforming Historical Harms*, I could see in our first articulation of the model that we came up short in addressing relations of power. With more study, I was able to acquire language that helped to describe the source of my dissatisfaction: the language and frameworks I acquired are, specifically, the language of narrative, discourse, and discursive positioning, associated with the "fields" of social construction. In the last five to seven years I have also become more engaged in the practices and theory associated with narrative therapy and narrative mediation. Introduction of constructionist principles and the use of narrative practices within a constructionist framework will transform the *Transforming Historical Harms* framework into an even more meaningful and effective framework. I intend to produce a substantially edited second edition incorporating the new framing. For now, at this stage of the journey, I will test the application of constructionist principles and narrative practices at the community level.

1.8.4 A luta continua...[14]

While the models that I have been engaged with and my own personal efforts and designs to this point have not been completely satisfying and effective, I am eternally hopeful that the situation is not unchangeable. Rather, I am convinced that the mechanisms for seeking change only need modification (as opposed to wholesale change or abandonment) in order to be effective. I also believe that in many instances if program implementers adopt approaches that are informed by constructionist principles this evolving framing and perspective will be the basis for substantive shifts both in the implementation and the efficacy of current programs.

---

[14] ***A luta continua*** (in English: *the struggle continues*) was the rallying cry of the FRELIMO movement during Mozambique's war for independence. The phrase is Portuguese, but was used by FRELIMO leader Samora Machel to cultivate popular support against the Portuguese colonial presence. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_luta_continua. This was also the rallying cry of several international freedom movements and was most often the last words in speeches and lectures of both Naim Akbar and Bobby E. Wright.

1.9 Greensboro, NC

In November 2011, near the end of the period of working with CTTT, the Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice and the University of California at Berkeley School of Law (Boalt Hall) hosted a conference entitled *Exposing Structural Racism from Within: The Power of Restorative Justice*[15]. A primary intention of the conference was to ask: "Can restorative justice practices and principles be used to dismantle structural racism?" I was privileged to offer the Keynote Address -- the Mario G. Olmos Endowed Lecture -- for the occasion. The title of my lecture that day was: "*Restorative Justice and Structural Racism: Promising Processes or Officious Intermeddler?*"

As the participants and I wrestled with the question, one of the prime examples often given on both sides of the argument for and against the positive impact of restorative justice processes in redressing or dismantling structural oppression was the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC or TRC). The SATRC has been researched widely and deeply. It has been considered an exemplary process for justice-seeking, reconciliation, and post-war community development -- so much so, that in many quarters the SATRC appears to have taken on mythological status. When a concept or experience takes on such mythological status, there is what Sara Cobb (2013) would call a compression of the narrative established for framing any interpretation of the experience. The compressed interpretive frame has the effect of revealing certain aspects of an experience while veiling others. For instance, with the SATRC, if success were measured in terms of the avoidance of a violent transition to a post-apartheid government, it was considered successful. The compressed narrative concerning the TRC, however, precludes conversations about the failure to address the stark economic inequality that plagues the country still today.

Awareness about the SATRC's mythological status and its compressed narrative prompted me to investigate other examples of applications of restorative justice to structural oppression that might help illuminate the question. Several international examples to consider include the gacaca (*ga cha-cha*) courts in Rwanda (see http://hir.harvard.edu/law-of-the-land/trying-times-for-rwanda), Fambul Tok

---

[15] http://ems.law.berkeley.edu/MasterCalendar/EventDetails.aspx?data=hHr8003M7J5Z%2FttqvgBWyDu0MnrAZbVGOdLt7i7cDOwNbm%2FN4s8ilSzUgh5DACQ4

in Sierra Leone (see: http://www.fambultok.com/), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Liberia (see: http://trcofliberia.org/). There are also TRC examples and other efforts at transitional justice in South America. One possible U.S. example to consider was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Greensboro, North Carolina (GNCTRC) (see http://www.greensborotrc.org/).

One of the conveners of the conference on structural racism was Mary Louise Frampton, the Henderson Center Faculty Director and Boalt Hall Professor, who teaches courses in civil rights, transitional justice, and restorative justice. She often uses both the South African and the Greensboro TRC experiences in her courses as exemplars of restorative justice applied to large societal issues. At the time of the Henderson Center conference, she was planning to serve as a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of the South at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) in order to conduct a fifth year follow-up study of the Greensboro TRC. The study would investigate how, if at all, the Greensboro TRC had affected the experience and perception of the community, especially related to issues of race and racism. After learning of my interests in transitional justice, restorative justice, historical trauma, structural and multigenerational oppressions, and community building, Frampton invited me to consult with her on the Greensboro Study.[16]

1.9.1 Understanding Greensboro.

Greensboro was founded in 1808 as the county seat of Guilford County, North Carolina. From its very foundation the town has always existed as a cross-roads community. Greensboro was a major railway junction for both industrial and passenger rail and a highly industrial town with paper and textile mills attracting workers from far away. Greensboro also sat at the edge of slavery and freedom. Although a town in the slaveholding southern United States, the first census in 1829 recorded 369 White residents, 101 slaves, 26 free Blacks.[17] In addition to its industrial presence, Greensboro also boasts of a progressive educational history. Colleges in town include Guilford College, which was founded by Quaker abolitionists as the first co-educational school in the state, Bennett College, an all-

[16] For the sake of full disclosure, it is important to report that I applied to be employed as the Executive Director of the TRC during the period of its formation and although I received an initial screening interview I was not hired. (I think they made the wrong choice but that's history). I was not selected and did not live in Greensboro, so my only continuing and limited information about the process was based on intermittent news accounts and presentations at various conferences and gatherings related to Restorative Justice, Community Development, or Peacebuilding.
[17] http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=142

women's historically Black college, Greensboro College was chartered by the Methodist Church as an all-women's charter (private) college, North Carolina A. & T., a historically Black state funded school, as well as University of North Carolina-Greensboro, which was founded as an all-women's campus. Greensboro has always also boasted of a small but consistently present and prominent Jewish community as well.

The presence of so many colleges and universities with a progressive agenda was a natural continuation of the role that the community had played as a place for freedom seekers. Greensboro had both free and enslaved Blacks, which made it a naturally attractive stop on the Underground Railroad, which was the process of providing private assistance for enslaved Africans in the south who were running towards the northern United States to states where slavery was not legal. Even during the Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s, the city was the site of important contributions to that freedom and equity agenda. It was students from North Carolina A. & T. State University, Bennett College, and Guilford College, along with many middle class and working class Blacks that conducted the first sit-ins at the downtown Woolworth's, seeking to integrate lunch counters and other public accommodations. Greensboro introduced that mode of civil disobedience, which was studied and widely adopted across the country.

For all of its history of progressive activity, it has not been without struggle and backlash. Greensboro is the home of the Guilford County Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. There is also a strong conservative political presence that has been organized in resistance to the progressive agenda. There was a highly visible and at time violent secessionist movement to separate High Point, which is the adjoining city with a much more conservative political agenda. There have been several violent efforts to resist unionization, including closing plants and facilities.

In addition to the events of November 1979, described below, there have been other recent events that have increased the sense of tension and division in Greensboro. There have been accusations of police misconduct both from outside and inside the police force. Although Greensboro has been described as one of the most immigrant friendly cities in the south, there were many official actions (and some allegedly intentional inaction) that left many in various immigrant communities to describe themselves as frightened and marginalized. Incidents

include, but are not limited to, unlawful surveillance, allegations of police-assisted or supported withholding of wages from migrant and day laborers, and the arrest of Jorge Cornell a leader in the Latino community. His supporters (Latino, Black, and White) describe him as a community leader and civic activist; the Greensboro police surveilled him and, when they were unable after several attempt to charge him with any crimes, they received the assistance of federal authorities who charged Jorge with racketeering and sentenced him to twenty-eight years in prison.

All of this is part of the back-story of Greensboro. These stories narrate the division of the community and are integrally related to the interpretation of the events of November 1979, the subsequent trials and the attempted Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

1.9.2 The Greensboro TRC.

In November 1979, two groups with what appear to be dramatically different views of the "best future" for Greensboro were both holding demonstration marches in and around downtown Greensboro on the same day and at the same time. One group of marchers represented the Guilford County (NC) Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and the other set of marchers represented an alliance of human rights and civil rights groups and the Communist Workers Party of America. The demonstration routes of the two groups overlapped at some point and a violent clash ensued between the two groups. The results of the clash were that several members of the human/civil rights and workers' party march group were killed or injured.

There were criminal prosecutions in response to the violence and deaths and, even though there was video evidence showing who had fired the fatal shots, no one was convicted of any crime as a result of the clashing marchers. The outcomes of these trials reinforced a substantial divergence on the narrative of the community among various segments of the Greensboro and Guilford County communities.

The GNCTRC was a process designed and convened with the stated mission of addressing these events in ways that supported an increased experience of unity for all residents. Here is an excerpt from the website and Final report of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission www.greensborotrc.org:

> The Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission was an independent, democratically selected body seeking truth and healing transformation for Greensboro, N.C., a city left divided and weakened by the events of Nov. 3, 1979. The seven commissioners were a respected

> group of individuals selected for their diverse perspectives, strengths and resolve to fulfill their Mandate.
>
> The Mandate of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (GTRC) reflects that, "There comes a time in the life of every community when it must look humbly and seriously into its past in order to provide the best possible foundation for moving into a future based on healing and hope."
>
> [The TRC] task was to examine the "context, causes, sequence and consequences," and to make recommendations for community healing around the tragedy in Greensboro, N.C., on Nov. 3, 1979, which resulted in the deaths of five anti-Klan demonstrators: César Vicente Cauce, 25; Michael Ronald Nathan, M.D., 32; William Evan Sampson, 31; Sandra Neely Smith, 28; and James Michael Waller, M.D., 36; and the wounding of demonstrators Paul Bermanzohn, Claire Butler, Tom Clark, Nelson Johnson, Rand Manzella, Don Pelles, Frankie Powell, Jim Wrenn; Klansman Harold Flowers, and news photographer David Dalton.

The final report was released May 25, 2006. (http://www.greensborotrc.org/)

In a city with both a progressive history and a violent past (and allegedly violent present), what if any efforts could be made to improve the quality of the lived experience of the community, particularly across the lines of race and ethnicity? This is what drew my attention to Greensboro.

1.9.3 Original engagement, questions, and early results.

Frampton and I both originally had an interest in Greensboro best described as "academic". Our initial shared intention was to receive first-hand person reports from a variety of Greensboro residents about how "the total TRC experience" – the creation of the idea, selection of staff and commissioners, the information gathering and deliberation processes, the commission's final report, and follow-up - had affected the lived experience of community, with regard to race or any other indication of community unity. Based on our initial discussions, I believe that neither she nor I intended at the outset to become involved in a community organizing or community change effort. After Frampton had conducted several preliminary interviews, she invited me to conduct several independent interviews. We also conducted a few joint interviews.[18] My participation in the separate and joint interviews allowed us to establish at least two different sets of perceptions that we

[18] The early work was supported by a generous grant from the Freeman Trust of New York.

could compare and contrast as we considered our original question. Those interviews were not conducted with the current study in mind. Because we were listening for impressions concerning actual and perceived structural changes, the interviews were not systematically recorded for purposes of coding or textual analysis. So while the interview content certainly shaped my perspective when I undertook the present inquiry, there is no recorded data.

Who was interviewed? The initial round of interviews was conducted in a typical "key informant" format, which included key leaders from the government, civil society, business community, local philanthropies, and faith/religious communities. In addition to individual interviews, we sought out locations where natural community gatherings occurred and - to the extent possible - observed exchanges in "natural" settings. In Greensboro, an important gathering place is the "Beloved Community Roundtable" (BCR). On most visits to Greensboro, Frampton and I attempted to attend some, if not all, of the BCR weekly gatherings.

"Beloved Community Roundtable**"** (BCR) - Every Wednesday at 1 p.m., the BCR is convened as a loosely-contained, unstructured opportunity for community dialogue. It is primarily populated by a certain ilk of social activists and representatives of progressive organizations and faith communities. Each week radical activists, progressives, academics, college students, faith leaders, and others drop in to the BCR for approximately two hours (or as much time as they can stay) to share what is happening in their world and to hear from one another. At various times in the ebb and flow of community life, the BCR becomes a central venue for coordinating action, exchanging vital and timely information, and reflecting on recent events. The size and composition of the group predictably waxes and wanes in direct relationship with the presence of emergent community issues. The group can swell to as many as five to six dozen people during periods of community crises. When there is not a pressing issue or a perceived need for immediate action in the community, the size of the BCR group drops to approximately ten to fifteen participants, but the group convenes regularly regardless. The BCR was an excellent place to take the pulse of one segment of Greensboro and also to identify additional (often marginalized or unrecognized) leadership voices to possibly include in future dialogue processes.

The Roundtable is hosted by Rev. Nelson Johnson and the Beloved Community Center (see http://www.belovedcommunitycenter.org/). Rev. Johnson was among the participants who were injured in the 1979 marchers' clashes. He was very instrumental in calling for the establishment of the Greensboro TRC. Some residents of Greensboro perceive that Rev. Johnson's community engagement methods and message have been both "confrontational" and "caustic". They have given him a totalizing label as a polarizing figure in the community.

1.9.4 Early results of listening.

Based on interview content, BCR dialogue, and several other independent observations (for example, a lecture and workshop on implicit bias by jon a. powell of The Ohio State University's Kirwain Institute, workshops sponsored by the Guilford County School Board, and the Guilford County Human Relations Commission, and sitting for hours at the Green Beanery Coffee Shop), race and racism were frequently referenced in the casually told and formally presented stories of lived experiences of most segments of the Greensboro community.[19] This was especially true for *people of color*, including the African, African American, Latino/Latina, and Middle Eastern - Palestinian, Arab, and Jewish – communities, who consistently reported a sense of diminished access, lack of inclusion, and inequity. Many Greensboro residents who primarily identified as White expressed the same perceptions (exclusion and perception of limited equality for people of color).

Throughout both our joint interviews and our independent interviews, Frampton and I were intentional about not sharing our evolving impressions with one another from one interview to the next in order to avoid any unconscious calibration of our perspectives before the next interview. Some unavoidable calibration may possibly have occurred in the jointly conducted interviews because we would hear the line of questions that the other pursued, giving some indication of how we were thinking about what we were hearing.

After the preliminary interviews, we shared our independently developed perspectives. Each of us had similar perceptions of the impact on the community of the total TRC experience. With specific regard to perceptions and the narrative of the

[21] Contributing to a racialized division of experience in the community were several active lawsuits with the police, the arrest and prosecution of Latino community leader Jorge Colón, and ongoing discussions about the future of the National Civil Rights Museum, which is located at the site of the Woolworth's where the original sit-in protests occurred.

impacts of the GNCTRC on race and racism, there had been some positive, and possibly also some detrimental, outcomes of the overall TRC experience. It could be that the consistency of the narratives reflects a shared and aligned perspective; alternatively, it could be that such consistency was reflective of the degree of narrative compression surrounding the entire TRC enterprise. (Cobb, 2013)

Many early interviewees (cultural informants) often described the processes of the TRC as particularly problematic in contributing to any lack of impact on the lived experience or narrative of race, inclusion, and community. Among the primary perceptions often referenced were:

- Questions concerning the TRC's organizational legitimacy (who decided that both questions raised and processes employed were appropriate, and whether the Commission itself was sufficiently independent);
- The perceived narrowness and exclusive nature of the process (who determined which story was worth hearing?); and
- Logistical and operational shortcomings (sometimes short notice before hearings, lack of widespread meeting announcements, perceived biases in location choice and meeting times, and so on).

Some members of the community appeared to see many of the process concerns through a lens of initial skepticism based on a seemingly inherent suspicion of the original intentions of the TRC. For a town the size of Greensboro, we discovered an inordinate number of individuals, community groups, and programs designed in one way or another to address issues of division, separation, equity, equality, increased relatedness, and justice. The size of the list, the number of people participating in various activities, and so many groups' focus on cross-construction relationships (i.e., cross-racial, cross-ethnic, cross-class) may be an indication of the extent of unacceptable levels of division, strained relationships, marginalization, and mistrust in multiple segments of Greensboro.

1.9.5 Organic methods.

After Frampton and I shared our perceptions with one another, our intention in regard to continuing engagement in the community necessarily shifted. In response to our original question *how, if at all, has the GNCTRC experience impacted the lived experience or perception of structural racism in Greensboro*? the answer seemed to be *Little, if at all*. The GTRC possibly increased an awareness of the

presence of felt injustice. However, the limited implementation of the TRC's recommendations contributed to the sense of limited influence. If we were to continue working with this community on issues related to lived and perceived experiences of racialized distinctions, and learn how restorative justice practices and principles affect the existence of or perceptions related to structural racism, we would have to move from a distant academic inquiry into a more engaged relationship to search for an answer.

Recognition of the need for a shift did not instantly produce a plan for a way forward or a structure for community engagement. As investigators, we were now being guided by a community-based participatory action framework and, to an even greater extent, by my experience in community building and organizing. Such approaches counsel that the *seeker* should allow their questions to guide the path of inquiry.

1.9.6 Shifting question and emerging methods.

The first question presented to those we interviewed in the original portion of the investigation was

> "What, if any, impact did the TRC process have on the lived experience of racialized distinctions among members of the Greensboro/Guilford County community?"

The answer that emerged with substantial agreement was:

> "There was an increased awareness of the perception of structural racism, exclusion, and access to decision making for people of color. The failure to adopt many of the recommendations and failure to fully implement other recommendations that were accepted may have resulted in an increasing sense of frustration, separation, distrust, and marginalization."

Following the answer to the first question, a second question emerged:

> "Considering the real possibility that the TRC processes themselves had been fatally flawed would it be possible to positively shift the experience of inclusion and equity for people of color in Greensboro by conducting a community engagement process based on principles of restorative justice to address the current multi-layered context of race, class, and community in Greensboro?"

Seeking an answer to this inquiry would require a shift from a detached objective observation to a more engaged participatory research model. Frampton and I recognized the implications of the second question for shifting the nature of

engagement. After consulting with one another and a few local cultural informants, we decided to make the shift.

The timing of the shift in focus of inquiry and engagement turned out to be fortuitous in that the new question emerged when I was developing new insights about social constructionism and imagining a design for my own research for the Taos/Tilburg Ph.D. program. At the same time, I was engaged in a web-based seminar with Saliha Bava (http://salihabava.com) on the *performative* aspects of research. Many insights were unfolding for me, including an insight that shaped much of the next phase of my inquiry. During the period that I was participating in Bava's performative research webinar, the following experience took place and sparked an insight that is pivotal to my work.

1.9.7 A moment and an insight.

I live primarily in Atlanta, Georgia. One of the great cultural institutions in Atlanta is its Botanical Gardens (http://atlantabotanicalgarden.org/*). One of the permanent features in the Gardens is a collection of large stone carvings in the shapes of a variety of animals. The carvings are considered touchable/explorable art and often attract the attention of young children who seem to enjoy climbing, swinging, and sliding on them. The sturdiness and styling of the carvings indicates that they were indeed constructed with child play in mind.*

One afternoon, I was enjoying a meditative moment at the Gardens, sitting taking in some sun on a bench near where the animal carvings are positioned. There were three groupings of people that I interpreted as being family units. There was a young adult couple speaking Spanish to one another and to the two children who were with them, one boy and one girl. The girl was taller, possibly older than the boy. The second group was a youngish – early to mid-20's – woman who I would describe as African American. She had three children with her, two boys and one girl. The third "family unit" was comprised of a youngish woman – late 20's early 30's. I would describe her as white or of some European descent. She also had two children with her; a boy and a girl; the boy was the taller and seemingly older of this pair.

As the White children played and frolicked in the grass, the boy made his first step to climb on the large rabbit carving. While he was still at position on the carving that was close to the ground, he called out "Mom?!" The woman looked up and called back, "Don't hurt yourself!" The young

boy climbed even higher on the carving until he had almost reached the top. His sister (the young White girl that was with him and the other woman I ascribed sister) also began to climb. Without prompting the mother called out again, "Don't hurt yourself!"

Having reached the top of the carving, the young White male child jumped off and ran in the direction of another carving, one that was a bit further away and appeared a bit taller than the first. Again the mother called out, "Be careful, don't hurt yourself!"

At this point I noticed both of the Spanish-speaking children and one of the three African American children - the tallest boy - talking to each other as they approached the carving that the White children had just left. The two boys began to climb on the carving. Two things happened almost simultaneously. The Spanish-speaking father called out, "Mariella, ven aqui" (Mariella, come here). The young Spanish-speaking girl quickly left the statue and trotted back towards her parent. When she arrived, her father held her at his side, kissed the crown of her head and she placed her head in his lap.

By this time the two boys had achieved the summit of the carving. The Spanish-speaking parents were laughing and the mother was clapping in seeming affirmation of this accomplishment.

The African American mother had a quite different reaction. She shouted, "Boy, don't make me come over there!"

The boy replied, "It's what they're for, mom!"

And again she replied, "Don't make me come over there!"

The Spanish-speaking boy and the African American boy jumped to the ground from the top of the carving. The Spanish-speaking boy started heading in the direction of the next carving on the circuit. He stopped and looked back when he noticed his "playmate" heading back towards the benches.

The African American boy walked slowly towards his mother, and he was crying. When he reached her, she grabbed his arm and pulled him close and said, "I don't care what they're doing, you can't always do sh++ just cause they're doin' it. You have to know what other people are gonna say when they look and see you doing stuff like that!!" And then she hugged him.

What occurred to me was this: long before we learn any narrative or the verbal aspects of a particular socially constructed category, we are usually given a "performative range" for that category ("Girls don't sit like that," "Boys don't cry,"

"Boys don't play with dolls, but if they do play with dolls, the dolls should practice killing or blowing things up," "You are Black, which means you have to be twice as smart, better, quiet, aware…," or "You are Black which means you can't…)". Built into the performative range is usually an embedded inequality with others who do not occupy the particular socially constructed category. (Boys have more privilege and freedom in the way they operate in certain spheres in the world than girls do, Whites more than Blacks, and so on).

Often, efforts to equalize the value of various categories across socially constructed lines involve dialogue as a measure of trust building, small or large engaged activity (building something together), or large-scale policy shifts. It strikes me that people learn to talk about equality and equity but, for many reasons, minimal effort is made in learning at the individual and collective level both how to "perform" equality and how to shift the discourse (and therefore the discursive positions) that sustain the performative experience of inequality.*[20]

In the moment at the Botanical Gardens, I watched the beginning -- or most likely the continuation of a process that had gone on all their lives -- of race-ing and en-gender-ing. The performative ranges and the limits of agency were being established for each of these children. For the young White children, the limits of agency were established as their own comfort and safety – you can go as far and as high as you want, just be careful, don't hurt yourself. For the Spanish-speaking children the en-gendering process was stark – the male child could do whatever others were doing and would be affirmed in the process; the female child was encouraged to stay near the parental unit. The African American child's instruction on agency had three significant features: 1) the lesson was based in fear – "Don't make me come over there!" is a clear and direct threat of force; 2) the limits of agency were being established based on the view of others – "Just cause they're doing it doesn't mean you can do it" and "You have to know what other folks will say when they see you," are each externally referential, placing emphasis on the perspective of those outside your community; and 3) The lesson was reinforced by an

[20] * "Inequality" is used here as a generic and broadly construed metaphor for unequal values assigned to various socially constructed categories. This different valuation of categories could result in the experience of marginalization, violence, or indignity, or in the extreme, efforts at extermination, genocide, or extirpation. People language these differences in terms like "dignity," "agency," "self-image", "access/Inclusion," or any number of other descriptions. Each description reflects a performative aspect of relational engagement as described in the earlier section on critical issues.

indication that the limits were established out of love and concern – at the end of the threat and restraint, the mother hugged the child. The larger concern was that all the children were watching and probably all got the same lessons about the limits of agency for everyone else in that situation.

1.10 How Performance Insights (Re)Shaped My Research

The implications of this insight for me were nothing short of revolutionary. Throughout my adult life from both a professional and personal development perspective, I have engaged in a variety programs designed to address issues of racism. Some of these programs were built on dialogue practices (Coming to the Table), relationship building (National Coalition Building Institute, Coming to the Table, Re-Evaluation Co-Counseling), and structural changes (civil rights litigation, community organizing, The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond). What the performative insight unveiled for me was that the first learning of culturally-valued differences across a variety of social constructed categories consisted of performative learning. Yet, most programs seeking to deal with lingering and collected inequalities focused on either dialogic experiences or structural changes. Neither approach gave individual participants an opportunity to embody the performance of equally valuing people who occupy different socially constructed categories. It is the embodiment and performance, I assert, that would allow the full experience of equal valuing to occur in the first place and then plant the seed of a discourse shift at the most intimate relational levels.

Greensboro at present, and over the past several years, had experienced many variations of relationship building, structural analysis, legal efforts, and change through education approaches to shifting the lived experience of race and racism in the community. I had previously noted that legacy and aftermath can contribute to the persistence of certain (trauma-sourced) narratives over multiple generations. I now could see that performative modeling contributed significantly to the persistence of this dominant narrative.

In thinking about injecting restorative justice principles in a community engagement process, the question I raised (mostly for myself) was this: could there be a way I could create a more *embodied* or performed relational experience for the participants? Further, was there a metaphor which, if taken up as a framing for community engagement, would make it more likely that members of a community

would be willing to experiment with new ways of relating to one another? Finally, would new experiences of relating increase the number and types of experiences that stood as alternatives to the persistent, conflict-saturated story of exclusion, limited access to decision-making, and separation? I was in search of an engagement model that

a. Introduced the *performative* metaphor;
b. Served as a foundation for creativity and play;
c. Incorporated embodied experiences of inclusion and non-separation and access to decision-making;
d. Worked with principles of restorative justice; and
e. Reproduced the trajectory of narrative mediation for the entire community engagement process.

I knew almost immediately that this was not a model that I would *find*; rather, this was a model that I would begin to develop in relationship with members of the community. Frampton and I then each conducted another round of interviews with many of the same people from the first round and some new people whose names had emerged through the inquiry process. In addition to new names, new questions were also emerging:

i. Is Greensboro a place where change with regard to race, ethnicity, and class is possible?
ii. Were the goals and possibilities from the TRC process worthwhile in furthering the aims of social change and social justice?
iii. If the TRC process itself was fatally flawed, might a community engagement process seeking to accomplish the original intent of the TRC be of value?
iv. If so, what would be important qualities of such a project?
v. With so many efforts related to community building and social justice happening at every level of the community in Greensboro and throughout Guilford County, what, if any, impediments limit the widespread effectiveness of the current efforts?

Findings from this round of interviews were surprising in their level of consensus and agreement on each of the questions posed. Here are representations of the consensus that emerged:

> People expressed exasperation, frustration, and skepticism, along with guarded hope and optimism**.** They described Greensboro as "a place where difference is possible [optimism], and that's what we have been trying to do for so long [verbal

performance of hope] to little or no avail [verbal performance of frustration and exasperation]." Some were starting to wonder "if people even want to be different or if the 'powers that be" will ever relinquish control" [which sounds like the verbal performance of resignation, frustration, or skepticism].

The goals of the TRC are still worthwhile. There was a broad recognition of a lingering sense of disaffection and division throughout Greensboro. Some suggested that the division was no longer racial or ethnic, but was formed now more along class lines. Others were aware of such reframing and reframed their analysis to suggest that class may have exaggerated or minimized the effects of otherwise pervasive racial and ethnic inequity. Alternatively, because of separation and exclusion (perceived or real), people of color were also the primary lower socioeconomic status occupants in the area, so their lived experience of Greensboro occurred at the intersections of race, ethnicity, and class, such that the power of what john a. powell (2012, p. 17) calls the "racialization of opportunity" could not be ignored. The collective wisdom of the cultural informants (that is, no one person offered the entire list, but most offered one or more items) described requirements for any new effort. Any new approach, in order to be compelling, should be action oriented, substantially different from previous approaches, honoring of and not distracting from other current local efforts, inclusive and accessible, safe, and forward-looking**.**

1.10.1 Epiphany and convergence: the advent of "Performing Greensboro".

Frampton and I continued in conversation with an ever-widening number and variety of community members. In all we interviewed more than one hundred twenty-five community members and talked with many of them on more than one occasion. In a shift of methods from our earlier *academic* inquiry, we moved from outside-observer to outside-inside collaborators, meaning that while we were still not members of the community, we cautiously and consciously took a more engaged role in problem identification, strategizing, and organizing for action. It seemed that a deeper level of sharing from participants occurred as a result of the shift. It allowed me to develop a more nuanced appreciation of the history, culture(s), and context of Greensboro and assisted in exploring possibilities for an opening to engagement.

In the second round of interviews, we met Preston Lane. Preston is the Chief Executive Officer and Theatrical Director of the Triad Stage, the premier theatre

company and one of the primary cultural institutions for the Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point (that is, Piedmont Triad) area (http://triadstage.org/). He talked of his desire to bring "culturally relevant" and "socially significant" theatre pieces to the Triad Stage. He described an upcoming offering, "*Trouble in Mind,*" by Alice Childress. After reading the script in consideration of the "performative" turn that my inquiry was taking, I posed the following questions to Preston:

> "In a play like "Trouble In Mind," when actors have been cast as initially unequal and at some point in the course of the story they are supposed to operate as equals, how do you as director "see" them "performing" equality?"
>
> "Is there something in an actor's behaviors that allows you to know that equality is being performed?"
>
> "Other than the words, what do you look for or what do you hope to show to the audience as a performative demonstration of equality?"
>
> "How would you give direction to a performer to convey that change?"

Then the three of us mused together… "*What if we got a diverse group of Greensboro residents to view the play and then posed these questions about demonstrations or performances of equality*?" We all agreed that it might definitely be worth a try. This was the moment when my involvement with the larger participatory action research project imagined with Frampton merged with my inquiry for this dissertation project.

1.10.2 The beginning of "Performing Greensboro".

The community engagement model revolving around the play was initially very loosely conceived:

a. Identify the *right mix* of community voices,
b. Secure tickets for them to see the play (preferably all on the same night)
c. Have them agree to come to a dinner dialogue gathering the next night; and
d. Facilitate a discussion of the play that might metaphorically represent Greensboro without directly discussing it.

1.11 Preview of Chapter II

This chapter has presented aspects of my journey and sought to connect my journey with a larger journey and to point to ways of understanding the questions I am asking as emerging from the questions that others have lived into over many

generations. The next chapter presents the various theoretical and philosophical approaches and frameworks that I draw from to inform this work. Social constructionism can also be understood as part of an emerging philosophical tradition. While concentrating primarily on an explication of constructionist principles and the concepts of narrative, performativity, power, and position, I will also provide theoretical grounding for many of the concepts and discourse that inform the conversation. After offering a theoretical and philosophical grounding the chapters that follow will describe and analyze the actual work that was done.

Chapter II - Literature Review

In this chapter, I present the various research and philosophical developments that frame my inquiry. Although the chapter precedes the description of the work and analysis of its contents in this report, the literature review was actually conducted following the guidance of Kathy Charmaz (2006; 2008) who encourages the investigator to not do a thorough literature review until after most of the data has been collected so that the natural inclinations of the investigator are not thwarted by the constraints of previously conducted research. This chapter is organized to accomplish two basic tasks: a) to situate the research in a broad philosophical tradition; and b) to frame my particular inquiry within that tradition. Chapter III, which is the literature review, focused on methods unpacks several significant concepts that undergird the methodological approaches I chose and the analytical frameworks that I have adopted; offers theoretical grounding for the methods by which my question could be asked; and gives a theoretical framing for the analytical approaches employed to make meaning of the information generated. In most instances throughout the review, I am not attempting to present an exhaustive statement of the existing literature but rather to distinguish the basis for the approach I took from other available approaches. Specifically, I distinguish among the various strands of constructionism, determining which aspects of narrative are appropriate; draw the needed distinctions between performance and performativity, and present the particular framing of the construct of *power* that I adopted to help make meaning of my work.

To accomplish those primary tasks, this Chapter has two sections. **Section I** situates and frames the question. In this section I briefly describe the broad philosophical traditions of postmodernist and non-positivist thought and in greater depth show the framework of social constructionism, which I adopt for this study, as situated squarely within postmodernism. Social constructionism itself does not have a specific set of tenets or propositions to which every social constructionist adheres. I present a theoretical core around which many of the social constructionist theories and practices have developed and from among those, I name certain principles that I hold as central to my theory of change. In **Section II,** I define some additional constructs that are important for my argument but not sufficiently central to warrant

expanded literature review. The constructs include trauma, cultural trauma, legacy, aftermath, racism/race, damaged identities and counter stories, and narrative compression. A major portion of this section also describes the evolution of thinking about how race, ethnicity, and other aspects of identity have evolved through the various philosophical traditions. As the philosophical stances have changed, this presents an opportunity for the modes of inquiry and action to also change. The questions that I am presenting are part of this evolution. I seek to add to the range of methods that are available to practitioners and researchers who are operating in community and who have adopted a constructionist framing and also who wish to test narrative principles.

After presenting the philosophical stances upon which the research is grounded, I will transition to Chapter III, which presents the specific literature undergirding the methods of facilitation. My primary goal is to present two engagement models that have narrative and performative theory and practices as a foundation. The narrative turn as a philosophical stance is intriguing. Yet, the question remains as to whether constructionist and specifically narrative practices can effect radical transformation when social constructs of identity are deeply embedded in the ways that people organize their lives and their societies and that organization produces fundamentally uneven landscapes of possibility.

2.1 Section I: Situating and Framing the Inquiry

My current research is situated in a postmodern philosophical tradition and within the social constructionist strand of postmodernism as first articulated by Berger and Luckmann (1966) and further developed by Kenneth Gergen (1985; 2001; 2009b) and his colleagues at the Taos Institute. Among the theoretical and practical developments that have emerged from the constructionist framing is what is described as the *narrative turn*. Many of the narrative principles and practices that have applied to healing work – psychology, therapy, psychiatry and mediation – have been informed by Michel Foucault (1980) and have also followed the early developments in narrative therapy of White and Epston (1990). I am also deeply influenced by Foucault, especially his framing of power and his utilization of the concept of discourse. I follow a line of *pracademics* that seek to expand White and Epston's work, especially as it applies to therapy (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Mehl-Madrona, 2007; Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997) and to the narrative

approach to mediation (Cobb, 2013; Monk & Winslade, 2013; Winslade & Monk, 2008).

Another thread of philosophy and practice that has emerged from within the constructionist paradigm is the ideas of performance and performativity, and especially how these notions inform the study of both identity and change processes and how research can be conducted and interpreted. With regard to the performative aspects of identity, I find Judith Butler's (1997a) approach particularly compelling. Finally, my incorporation of performance and performativity in change processes is deeply influenced by Augusto Boal (1985) and Michael Rohd (1998) and others.

2.1.1 Modern/positivist philosophical traditions.

The primary thrust of most scientific endeavors is to establish the *isness* of an experience. That is to say that through various methodological frameworks, which we call 'normal science' (Kuhn, 1962) (biology, physics, chemistry, psychology, history, and so on), people have made attempts to describe phenomena in ways that establish a static, predictable, replicable experience of that phenomenon. Once established, that description becomes an explanation of what the phenomenon "is." This "isness" is presented as a reality and then normal science sets out through more in-depth application of its methods to further refine our understanding of the phenomenon. The phenomenon can then be categorized by its likeness and distinction to other phenomena that have also had their "isness" determined within the specific framework of that normal science.

If the isness of a phenomenon can be established, and sufficiently described then an assertion can be made that the essential character of the phenomenon *exists within the phenomenon itself* (Burr, 2003, pp. 29-30). If this is an accurate assertion, then a further assertion can be made that anyone who experiences this phenomenon will discover the essential character of the phenomenon whenever and wherever the phenomenon is encountered. The meaning and character of the phenomenon exists in a stable, repeatable, discoverable form, notwithstanding the context in which it is found and regardless of the experience or circumstance of the finder which is to say that the meaning actually exists in the world and not just in the words. (Bruner, 1986)

This is the primary claim of those who adopt an essentialist view: reality is. Through appropriate methodological inquiry, the reality of any phenomena can be

discovered and this reality can be sufficiently represented linguistically. This same shared reality will be found and experienced by anyone who experiences this phenomenon (Nowell-Smith, 1977). The meaning of the phenomenon is essential to the phenomenon and both the phenomenon and its meaning exist and persist, regardless of whether it is experienced. By contrast, there are many modes of inquiry that reflect a postmodernist or non-positivist worldviewing.

Structuralism is a worldviewing that was presented as an alternative to modernist or positivist thought. Structuralism seeks to analyze a phenomenon in such a way as to determine the underlying structure of every instance of that particular phenomenon. For instance, in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Claude Levi-Strauss (1967) sought to identify "the common element of all cultures, traceable ultimately to the universal structures embedded deep in the human mind" (Belsey, 2002, p. 42). While the structuralist approach is distinguishable from positivism, there is ultimately the assumption of something irreducible, essential and discoverable. Poststructuralism and postmodernism were presented as an alternative way of considering knowledge.

2.1.2 Postmodern/non-positivist philosophical traditions.

Historians of science and philosophy often identify the evolution of inquiry as passing through certain historic periods including the periods labeled Medieval, Enlightenment or Modern, and Postmodern. The Medieval period was one in which the Church was the arbiter of truth and moral standards. A primary standard for truth for this period was the doctrine issued from the church - *ex cathedra*. The Enlightenment or Modern period, which followed the Medieval period, was one in which individuals, as opposed to a large institution, were responsible for the search for truth. The primary emphasis of this period was a search for the truth as both observable and demonstrable as opposed to a truth realized through faith. This search resulted in the development of methods and standards of proof that subsequently became identified as the "scientific method," in which objective facts could be discovered through controlled experimentation. Following the Enlightenment/Modern period was a period described as Postmodern.

In the postmodern era, some scientists and philosophers observed that all search for "truth" through science was historically and culturally situated, that there were underlying structures and rules that framed the inquiry, and that the concepts

and language used to search for the truth (that is, paradigms) predetermined a range of possible outcomes that were suitable to that time and culture (Kuhn, 1962). The postmodern approach to inquiry developed in a variety of disciplines in response to this observation. Kupferberg and Green (2005) describe the paradigm shift from modernism to post-modernism in this way:

> Dating from the Enlightenment and Descartes, the modern paradigm is based on the belief that a cognizing self can use reason and knowledge to understand and manipulate an objectively verifiable world. The post-modern paradigm abandons the individual-world duality and makes a radical move to a sociolinguistic frame. In the postmodern view, reality – even so called scientific reality – is woven and rewoven on shared linguistic looms. (Kupferberg & Green, 2005, pp. 6-7, quoting Hoffman, 1997)

2.1.3 Postmodernism.

Postmodernism can best be described as "reconsideration" more so than "total rejection" of modernism, which is also sometimes labeled as "positivism." In a modernist or positivist world viewing, science was seen as the way to discover the truth, which exists independently of whether people ever discover it. In a positivist framing, truth is understood to be present and constant, notwithstanding an individual's perception or the cultural context or historical period of the inquiry. Also, from a positivist perspective, the purpose of science is to discover a truth and then to understand the dynamics and operation of the world with regard to that truth so well that others might predict its operation and control it or, at the very least, control for it. In the positivist worldview, the universe and its inhabitants are determined; they operate by laws of cause and effect, which can be discerned if the unique approaches of the appropriate scientific method are applied. "The key approach of the scientific method is the experiment, the attempt to discern natural laws through direct manipulation and observation" (Stahl, 2007).

To help clarify the distinction between a postmodern worldview and the two other primary prevailing worldviews, Freedman and Combs (1996), citing David Paré (1995) offer this explanation:

> The primary feature that distinguishes worldviewings is the understanding of reality and our access to it. "Paré says that three beliefs exist: (1) "reality is knowable" – its elements and workings can be

> accurately and reliably discovered, described, and used by human beings; (2) we are prisoners of our perceptions – attempts to describe reality really tell us a lot about the person doing the describing, but not much about the external reality; and (3) knowledge arises from within communities of knowers - the realities we inhabit are those we negotiate with one another. (p. 20)

Respectively, these three positions would be characterized as 1) positivist or modernist; 2) constructivist; and 3) postmodern or (social) constructionist. By comparison to a modernist/positivist approach to the world, a postmodernist approach operates with of a sense of less certainty, less reliance on the possibility for prediction and control, and more of a perspective that the understanding and experiencing of the world exists either in the perception of the person (constructivist) or within an established framework developed through the relationships of a community of knowers (constructionist).

In an effort to make meaning of the meaning-making processes that provide the experiences for people's lives, researchers operating from a postmodern perspective often operate within a loose consensus concerning certain principles. These include

- There are limits on the ability of human beings to measure and describe the universe in any precise, absolute and universally applicable way. This differs from modernism, which emphasizes objectivity, facts, replicable procedures, and generally applicable rules.
- Realities are socially constructed.
- Realities are constituted through language.
- Realities are organized and maintained through narratives.
- Socio-cultural narratives construct the contextual realms of possibility from which individuals and families can select the ingredients and forms for their own personal narratives (Laird, 1989).
- There are no essential truths (Freedman & Combs, 1996, p. 22).

These are each principles that undergird my inquiry.

2.1.4 Significance of language in post-modernity.

As highlighted in the above stated principles, a postmodern or constructionist framing gives a central role to the social nature of language in understanding the way experiences are given meaning and the ways those meanings are transmitted. In this perspective, language does not give a description of the world as it is, rather language

is used to create the experience of the world, and subsequently, the experience of the world is framed in the language that we are given to describe the world we experience (Burr, 2003, pp. 47-48). The centrality of the sociolinguistic framing in postmodernism reinforces the notion that, in a postmodern view, meaning is made and not discovered. Postmodernism

> relocates meaning-making processes by shifting them from the isolated mind to discourse, or language that is used in a specific context (or world) and is reflexively related to it. In fact, it is human beings who participate in discourse and in so doing, construct the meaning of the world and the meaning of the self that constitutes part of the human mind. So viewed from a postmodern perspective, the mind and the world are now reflected and constructed in discourse. (Kupferberg & Green, 2005, p. 7)

Two of the foundational contributors to the understanding of the role of language in the experience of reality are the founder of modern linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure and the philosopher and linguist J. L. Austin.

2.1.4.1 de Saussure

In his course in General Linguistics (Saussure, 1959, 2011) Saussure observed

> Some people regard language, when reduced to its elements, as a naming process only – a list of words, each corresponding to the thing it names… This conception is open to criticism on several points. It assumes that ready-made ideas exist before words; it does not tell us whether a name is vocal or psychological in nature; finally, it lets us assume that the linking of a name and a thing is a very simple operation – an assumption that is anything but true.

He later goes on to say

> [E]very means of expression used in society is based, in principle, on collective behaviors or -- what amounts to the same thing – convention. Polite formulas, for instance, though imbued with a certain natural expressiveness … are nonetheless fixed by rule; it is this rule and not the intrinsic value of the gestures that obliges one to use them. (Saussure, 1959, 2011, pp. 66, 69)

Saussure's observations help us think about a number of features of relating to others in community, two of which are worth highlighting here: the identity categories to which people are assigned are socially constructed, formed through language and not based on an intrinsic value or property of the person being assigned. Relationships are also based on socially constructed and reinforced

behavioral patterns that come to be recognized as convention. Saussure also argues that language, once established, is resistant to change for a variety of reasons. Three reasons that he holds up to press his point are 1) the arbitrary nature of the connection between the sign or word itself and the thing that it signifies (its object of representation); 2) the ubiquitous and received nature of language – language is usually transmitted along with all its signs and signifiers as the way reality occurs and the only way that it could occur. Also because language is received from generations past and passed on to generations to come, it is difficult to establish a basis for change; and 3) the paradoxical relationship between the mutability and immutability of change.

> In the last analysis, two facts are interdependent: the sign is exposed to alteration because it perpetuates itself. What predominates in all change is the persistence of the old substance; disregard for the past is only relative. That's why the principle of change is based on the principle of continuity. (Saussure, 1959, 2011, p. 74)

To sum up Saussure's contribution to the current research inquiry: society is experienced through language. Language is comprised of signs which represent the arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified. Our relationships in community and society are based on the collective *behavioral* conventions that are formed in response to and reflective of the *language*. Language itself is immutable even in its mutability. And the principles of change are based on principles of continuity, which suggests that any effort at societal change must of necessity involve both language and behavior. The current study, in fact, is based in principles of narrative and performance. Change must also be built on the principle of continuity of substance as the starting point for substantial change. By narrating both the dominant narrative and the currently existing unique outcomes – a process to be described in detail in Chapter III and demonstrated in Chapter V – the processes presented build from continuity as the basis for radical change.

2.1.4.2 J. L. Austin

There are other ways in which language shapes the lived experience, especially the lived experience in communities. J. L. Austin, in the William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955 (Austin, 1962), describes a particular kind of use of language. Among the many linguistic activities that he analyzes, he gives priority to what he calls *the performative utterance* or *the performative sentence* (p.

6). These performative sentences are of the type that Austin identifies as not being either true or false, and not describing an action or stating an emotion, rather these are utterances that constitute the doing itself. The quintessential examples that he offers are that of becoming married – "I do"— or naming a ship – "I hereby name this vessel" – or placing a wager – "I bet you". The question that Austin then poses is, "Can saying it make it so?" And while there may be other actions that follow on after the performative saying, and there may in certain instances be performances that do not require the saying in order to accomplish the said deed, it is the case, Austin argues, that these performative statements in and of themselves are actions.

What is most interesting for our purposes is the circumstance in which performative utterances – the speaking that is the doing of a thing – can often be mistaken for statements – a true or false description of a circumstance – or vice versa. To have societies where the possibility of being equitable exists would require that race, ethnicity, gender, and other socially constructed identity categories were, following Saussure's formulation, merely behavioral conventions associated with arbitrarily constructed signs. It seems though that these labels have the possibility of acquiring the quality of Austin's performative utterance. Is someone of a particular race, ethnicity, or gender or does stating it make it so? Or, to follow Saussure and Austin even further, are there particular behaviors or actions that can substitute for the performative utterance to accomplish the act? If this is the case, then the performatives and aethetics associated with various divisions and categories of people have the capacity to situate the person in a category. Once situated in that category, all actions will be interpreted through the filter and from the position of the correlative discourses of that category and its intersection with other categories and their discourse.

To pursue that and other questions the current research is situated in a postmodern stance. Postmodern, specifically constructionist positions will allow an investigation of how lived experiences are produced and reproduced in relationship as opposed to imagining or assuming that the current differential quality of lived experiences derives from an essential state of nature or a pre-existing reality that can be discovered. This area of inquiry is of prime importance to social constructionism, which is a theoretical strand that has been articulated from within the postmodern stance. Often the chosen methodology for inquiry is associated with a particular

academic discipline. For purposes of this study what is more consequential than particular disciplinary traditions is the particular *paradigm* that informs the inquiry because paradigms can often be adopted across multiple disciplines. Social constructionism, the chosen paradigm for this work, is a paradigm within the postmodern tradition that can inform work in many different academic disciplines.

2.1.5 What are paradigms?

The most often quoted discussion of the concept of paradigm is Thomas Kuhn's as first articulated in his seminal text *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1962). Kuhn describes a paradigm as a set of "universally accepted scientific achievements that, for a time, provides model problems and solutions for a community of researchers" (p. 197). As examples of the way model problems and solutions operate, Kuhn suggests that a paradigm would determine a) what is to be observed and scrutinized; the kinds of questions that are supposed to be asked and probed for answers in relation to the subject; how these questions are supposed to be structured; and how the results of scientific investigations should be interpreted.

One of the most significant aspects of Kuhn's approach was the recognition that paradigms are influenced by the political, historical, and structural environments in which they are developed and that a paradigm establishes what is scientifically acceptable or "normal" (p. 37). Kuhn proposes that a revolution in a science causes the science to reformulate itself with new tools and methods and metaphors at the same time that it shifts the nature and framing of questions and models of interpretation. Said differently, a revolution occurs in this way: when the field from which knowledge can be drawn shifts and the methods of discovery shift, then, of necessity, the questions and modes of inquiry will change and the way of understanding the answers will also change.

While the present study is primarily focused on describing new models or methods for community dialogue emerging from the evolving philosophical tradition of social constructionism, there is also a way in which these new methods and models represent a shift in how to consider socially constructed identity categories, like race. In this study, the methods were applied to questions of race and how that particular social construct is given meaning and lived experienced in one particular community in the United States. However, my intention is that the engagement approach, when contextualized, could contribute to inquiry on other issues at the intersection of

power with other social constructs. Ultimately, the intent of the present study is to contribute to the continuing shift in approaches to community that operate at the intersections of socially constructed identity markers and relations of power in ways that consider new fields of inquiry, invite new ways of asking the questions, and also invite new approaches to interpretation – that is, a paradigm shift. While there are many paradigms within postmodernism that might help make this contribution, this research was conducted within a framework and relying on principles and worldviewing most closely associated with "social construction."

2.1.6 Social constructionism as a paradigm.

> What is social constructionism? Sometimes called a movement, at other times a position, a theory, a theoretical orientation, an approach: psychologists remain unsure of its status … That there is no single social constructionist position is now more obvious than ever, and that positions that have never labeled or identified themselves as social construction are sometimes labeled this way simply adds to the confusion. (Stam, 2001)

It is not my intention to make an argument about the appropriate categorization for social constructionism, I choose instead to relate to social constructionism as both a paradigm and a set of orienting principles for the inquiry. My orientation within the field of social construction begins with Berger and Luckmann (1966), who sought to build a bridge in sociology from a study of society based on phenomenology to an understanding of knowledge as socially generated and reproduced. They sought to explain that human beings collectively are in a dialectical relationship with the social world in the sense that human interaction creates the social world which then interacts to create and produce human beings. Berger and Luckmann offer this formulation:

> Society is a human product.
> Society is an objective reality.
> (Hu)man is a social product. (p. 61)

This three part formulation corresponds to the three moments that Berger and Luckmann identify as characterizing societal makeup and being essential to any analysis of society: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. It is in these three simultaneous and continuous moments that reality is socially constructed.

In the early days of the development of social constructionism, there was a parallel strand developing to describe some aspects of knowledge but not all

knowledge as Berger and Luckmann had proposed as being socially established. Stahl (2007) identifies two important [paradigms] that present distinctly different approaches to knowledge, reality, and experience than positivism: constructionism and interpretivism. Constructionism (social constructionism) highlights the roles that interaction and communication play in the process of constructing reality (Gergen, 1999) while interpretivism takes a less comprehensive view than constructionism by asserting that the constructionist principles only apply to *social* reality but not every aspect of lived experience (Stahl, 2007). The constructionist perspective, which I have adopted for this study, can be adopted for most any discipline of study.

In an effort to distinguish the modernist paradigm from the postmodernist and constructionist paradigm, Bruffee (1986) identifies four assumptions of the modernist philosophy that are not embraced by social contructionists that fundamentally alter the constructionist relationship to, and use of, what is presented as knowledge or even reality.

> Assumption 1 - there must be a universal foundation, a ground, a base, a framework, a structure of some sort behind knowledge or beneath it, upon which what we know is built, assuring its certainty or truth. We normally think of that ground or structure as residing either in the inner eye (a concept, an idea, a theory), or in nature as mirrored in the mind (the world, reality, facts).
>
> Assumption 2 - We assume that terms such as cognitive processes, conceptual frameworks, intellectual development, higher order reasoning, and so on, refer to universal, objectifiable, and perhaps even measurable entities.
>
> Assumption 3 - the individual self is the matrix of all thought: I think, therefore I am. A great idea is the product exclusively of a single great mind.
>
> Assumption 4 - there is something inherently problematic about knowledge; the visual metaphor of cognitive theory provides no necessary connection between the mind's two pieces of equipment, the inner mirror and the inner eye. There is a gap between them that cognitive theory offers no help in bridging. (pp. 777-780)

The social constructionism alternatives to these assumptions are transformational in the way that the meaning can be made of what is experienced in the world. Constructionism presumes that there is no such thing as a universal

foundation, ground, framework, or structure of knowledge. Cognition, intellectual processes, frameworks, and so on are "ways of talking about a way of talking" (Bruffee, 1986, p. 777). Meaning is arrived at through consensus and the perpetuated in narrative and symbol and discourse. Knowledge is, therefore, not the product of an individual but the result of community creation and maintenance. "Indeed, some social constructionists go so far in their non-foundationalism as to assume, along with the sociologist Erving Goffman for example, that even what we think of as the individual self is a construct largely community generated and community maintained" (p. 779). Ultimately, knowledge itself is a social construct non-existent in the *a priori* realms of space and time and nature, all of which are social constructs.

Following Kuhn, Bruffee (1986)asserts that

> A social constructionist position in any discipline assumes that entities we normally call reality, knowledge, thought, facts, texts, selves, and so on are constructs generated by communities of like-minded peers. Social construction understands reality, knowledge, thoughts, facts, texts, selves, and so on as community generated and community maintained *linguistic* entities – or, more broadly speaking, symbolic entities — that define or constitute the communities that generate them, much as the language of the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Gettysburg Address in part constitutes the political, the legal, and to some extent the cultural community of Americans. (p. 774)

Ken Gergen (1985) summarizes the social constructionist orientation in this way:

> Social constructionist inquiry is principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they now exist, as they have existed in prior historical periods, and as they might exist should creative attention be so directed. (p. 266)

Gergen also identifies several assumptions that often guide those who operate inside a constructionist frame:

> 1. What we take to be experience of the world does not itself dictate the terms by which the world is understood.
> 2. The terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated exchanges among people. The process of understanding is the result of an active cooperative enterprise of persons in relationships.

3. The degree to which a given form of understanding prevails or is sustained across time is not fundamentally dependent on the empirical validity of the perspective in question but on the vicissitudes of social processes (for example, communication, negotiation, conflict, rhetoric).
4. Forms of negotiated understanding are of critical significance in social life, as they are integrally connected with many other activities in which people engage. (pp. 267-269)

In a different writing, Gergen (2009) adds three additional observations about the ways that social constructions operate to shape lived experiences: constructions gain their significance from their social utility; as we describe and explain, so do we fashion our future; and reflection on our taken-for-granted worlds is vital to our future well-being.

Vivien Burr (2003), another key articulator of the social constructionist framework, takes a similar approach to describing constructionism as does Gergen. Burr asserts that there is no one position shared by all writers that would be considered social constructionist. What she presumes instead is that among constructionists and those writers and philosophers characterized as constructionist (with or without their assent) they have as a foundation of their writing one or more of the following key assumptions:

- *A critical stance towards "taken-for-granted" knowledge*: Social constructionism cautions us to be ever suspicious of our assumptions about how the world appears to be. (pp. 2-3)
- *Historical and cultural specificity*: The categories we use and the concepts by which we explain the world are developed in historically and culturally specific contexts that often don't translate to others. (pp. 3-4)
- *Knowledge is sustained through social processes*: It is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated. (This is why language is of particular interest to constructionists because the language reveals the form of the current way of understanding the world). (p. 5)
- *Knowledge and social action go together*: description or constructions of the world therefore sustain certain patterns of social action and exclude others. (pp. 5-6)
- *Anti-essentialism*: there are no essences inside of people that make them who they are. (p. 6)

- *Questioning Realism:* our knowledge does not reflect a direct perception or representation of reality; there is no such thing as an "objective fact." (pp. 6-7)
- *Language is a pre-condition of thought:* "We are born into a world where conceptual frameworks and categories used by people in our culture already exist," and meaning is made by use of the categories and concepts that exist inside of the language that we are given. (pp. 7-8)
- *Focus on process*: in contrast to psychological concepts such as "personality types," "intelligence," and "socioeconomic status" the constructionist focus is on the patterns, relationships, and systems that constrain and reinforce certain patterns. (p. 9)

Social constructionism is the chosen frame of inquiry for this study because, as Gergen (2009) outlines it, "The scholar's task is not to 'get it right' about the nature of world, but to generate understandings that may open new paths to action" (p. 81) The intention of this engagement was not to discover a truth or an objective reality about the conditions and relationships among citizens in Greensboro. Rather, the intention was to learn from participants, the ways that the meaning they make regarding race, class, and community were shaping their lived experience and to look for openings to new ways of action and meaning-making that result in more satisfying relationships and lived experiences.

Gergen (1985) also notes that social constructionist inquiry has been primarily focused on broad concepts (gender, aggression, motivation), the "language forms that pervade society, the means by which they are negotiated, and their implications for other ranges of social activity" (p. 270). These are the larger questions about which I chose to inquire and have chosen constructionism as opposed to structuralism as the analytical model.

2.1.7 Poststructuralism and social construction.

Like Berger and Luckmann (1966), Burr (2003) seeks to build a bridge that transitions knowledge and inquiry from one way of knowing and making meaning to another – from positivism to constructionism and from structuralism to poststructuralism and constructionism. Burr argues that many of the frameworks of inquiry that operate in a modernist or positivist frame propose either fixed meanings of words and concepts or assume underlying structures as the basis for understanding the relationships that exist in society. For instance, in psychoanalysis,

Burr identifies the underlying structure as the unified, solitary individual who is in possession of a personality (p. 83). It is the interaction of these innate personalities that explains the relationship patterns witnessed in society. Similarly, Marxian analysis, Burr posits, proposes the existence of underlying economic structures that, if understood, could explain the workings of other structures in society as well as explain the behavior of individuals as they interact with the structures, institutions, and other individuals (pp. 83-84). A structuralist position is similar in many ways to other essentialist and positivist positions in that it assumes fixed relationships that exist outside of the socially shaped meaning-making process of human relationships.

A school of thought that is for some closely related and for others included in the constructionist framework is poststructuralism or deconstructionism. In *Poststructuralism: A very short introduction,* Belsey (2002) summarizes the poststructuralist school of thought this way:

> Poststructuralism names a theory or a group of theories, concerning the relationship between human beings, the world, and the practice of making and reproducing meanings. On the one hand, poststructuralists affirm, consciousness is not the origin of the language we speak and the images we recognize, so much as the product of the meanings we learn and reproduce. On the other hand communication changes all the time, with or without intervention from us and we can choose to intervene with a view to alter meanings. (p. 5)

Among the primary articulators of poststructuralist positions are French philosophers Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Many constructionists rely extensively on Michel Foucault's understanding of power/knowledge and his genealogical and archeological approach to knowledge as a method of analysis to affirm constructionist positions. My analysis is also deeply informed by Foucauldian understandings of power/knowledge, which I will present in greater depth in the next section of this chapter.

Structuralists and poststructuralists, including Foucault, de Saussure, Levi-Strauss, and Derrida, each emphasize the significance of language and the meaning-making process in constraining how people live and relate to one another. The language that people learn at an early age provides a way of structuring relationships with others.

> Socialization, broadly defined, is the process through which a child or other novice acquires the knowledge, orientations, and practices that enable him or her to participate effectively and appropriately in the social life of a particular community. This process - really a set of densely interrelated processes - is realized to a great extent through the use of language, the primary symbolic medium through which cultural knowledge is communicated and instantiated, negotiated and contested, reproduced, and transformed. (Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002, p. 332)

In any culture or community, in order to effectively relate to others, it becomes essential to learn the linguistic/symbolic system that is currently used to organize relationships and make meaning. The socially constructed nature of the categories and meanings already present in the language/symbolic system are, for the most part, hidden from the users of the language. The language then, including its metaphors and ideologies, gives a *taken-for-granted* sense of appropriateness and lack of changeability for the systems, institutions, patterns, and practices that have been developed to sustain and reproduce the value systems that inform and are informed by the language.

Some scholars question the extent to which social constructionism has explanatory value, suggesting that there must be a pre-existing reality that formed the basis upon which socialization and social meaning making began (Friedmann, 2006). In direct response to these critiques and reinforcing the role of language as central to knowledge, Hirschmann (2006) posits that "there is a 'there' there, but as soon as you recognize its existence, it enters language and begins to be constructed." (p. 203)

During the initial processes of language acquisition, there is also a process of learning to *perform* certain identity-giving constructs appropriately. Girls and boys are taught to perform girlness and boyness in certain culturally specific ways, even before they acquire the linguistic or historical-discursive underpinnings of that particular identity-shaping construct. The colors they are given as appropriate, the clothes, style of hair, toys, models of play, and interaction (that is, levels of roughness forcefulness, and competitiveness) are all given in a performance-based process that both precedes and occurs simultaneously with language acquisition, which means the performance is equally as invisible and taken-for-granted as the language. As I will later argue, the performance of these socially constructed categories often has an

embedded sense of inequality that cannot be completely transformed unless a Foucault-styled archeological inquiry is accompanied with a performative re-learning as well.

Because many poststructuralist and social constructionist theorists emphasize the role of language, it is important to fully attend to the role of language in social construction. And because language creates and performs, it is important to distinguish concepts that are integrally related. In the next two sections, I introduce two concepts – discourse and performativity - that are central to constructionist thought and also deeply inform my work. Although presented as separate subjects, there is a deeply experienced interconnectivity between discourse and performativity. In the same way that Berger and Luckmann propose that human beings both produce and then are a product of society, discourse informs and then is informed by the performativity of that discourse.

Another way that the role and work of language are considered and studied is in the broadly conceived field of narrative studies. Narrative is an entire field unto itself with multiple different dimensions, approaches, methods, and applications in many different disciplines. As opposed to presenting a broadly stated description of the entire field at this juncture, in a later section of this chapter, I will delineate the concept of narrative from within the field of narrative inquiry; but I will only seek to distinguish the aspects of narrative that I draw from for this inquiry and analysis.

2.1.8 Discourse.

The term discourse often refers to "an instance of situated language use" (Burr, 2003, p. 63). "The term is primarily used in one of two senses to refer to: (1) a systematic, coherent set of images, metaphors and so on that construct an object in a particular way, or (2) to refer to the actual spoken interchanges between people" (p. 202). The two usages, while often overlapping, have some differing assumptions and concerns. The second usage – the spoken interchange between people — assumes that people have the capacity to draw on and control the use of language in any way that they wish. People are seen as fully competent agents with regard to the use of language and therefore total agents of the construction of their own circumstances. This position is what Burr and others label *microconstructionism*. Micro social construction is said to take place at the level of every day conversations between

people. Gergen and Gergen (2003), Rom Harré (Davies & Harré, 1990) and Jonathan Potter (1996) are each identified by Burr as micro constructionists. (p. 21)

The first usage – coherent images, metaphors, and so on – is the perspective associated with the position that Burr labels *macroconstructionism*.

> Macro social constructionism acknowledges the power of language but sees this as derived from, or at least related to, material social structures, social relations, and institutionalized practices. The concept of power is therefore at the heart of this type of social constructionism, which includes deconstructionist approaches … Macro social constructionism is influenced by the work of Michel Foucault … Since the focus is on power, macroconstructionists are especially interested in analyzing various forms of social inequality such as gender, race and ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and mental health, with a view to challenging those through research and practice. (pp. 21-22)

Both of these perspectives are essential to the process of shifting the lived experiences of entire communities that are deeply affected and constrained by the operations of discourses such as race and class. The *macro* constructionist framework is essential for this effort because the intersecting language, metaphors, systems, structured, and institutionalized relationships that exist to create specific understandings of most constructs that comprise identity – like race, gender, ethnicity, and class. This is the set of discourses that I primarily focus on. And yet, the performative nature of everyday language utilization requires that attention also be paid to the most "granular" level of relational detail. My model of granular communication, later delineated, seeks to integrate both macro and microconstructionism in analysis of speech acts and communication at the level of interpersonal exchange and consider how those exchanges shape the lived experience of community.

2.1.9 Discursive position.

One significant concept within the theory of discourse, particularly as it relates to macro construction, is the notion of *discursive position***.** Discourse has its primary effect in the shaping and constraining of relationships through the positions that are offered, whether accepted or resisted, and the relations of power embedded in the discursively constructed relationships. Vivien Burr (2003) characterizes discursive positioning in this way:

> Discourses address us as particular kinds of people (as an old person, or a career, as a worker, or a criminal and so on) and furthermore we cannot avoid these subject positions, the representations of ourselves and others that these discourses invite. Our choice is only to accept them or try to resist them, and if we are unable to resist a particular subject position we are locked into the system of rights, speaking rights and obligations that are carried with that position. (p. 111)

Burr further describes the effects of discursive positioning by quoting Willig (1999b) who says, "Individuals are constrained by available discourses because discursive positions pre-exist the individual whose sense of self (subjectivity) and range of experience are circumscribed by available discourses" (Burr, 2003, p. 111).

There are several significances in these descriptions of the role of discursive positions in the formation of community. First, individuals participate in a social dialectic enterprise in which possibilities for action and inclusion are offered to them based on pre-existent, externally-formulated, subjectivities, which they accept, embrace, embody, or refuse and resist.

Monk et al. (1997) notice that discourses can have a "prescriptive effect" that shapes the expectations that others have of the individual and that individuals have of themselves and others. These same discourses, often in subtle ways, guide the meaning-making processes that result in conflict. "Positioning in discourse is important in relation to our ability to contribute socially" (p. 39). While discourses are already always lurking and interacting to inform the co-active meaning-making process, for at least three reasons it would be wrong to say that discourses control or determine behaviors. First, discourses make what are known as *position calls*. A position call is an invitation to respond/act/perform from a particular discursive position. Position calls are always by invitation, which means they can be refused, resisted, modified or accepted. Secondly, people are multi-relational beings (Gergen, K. J., 2009b). This is to suggest that it is not just possible, but likely, that people hold varied positions in multiple discourses at the same time (Monk et al,1997), and misalignment of the prominence of one discourse over others will shape the response. This occurs where the respondent is reacting from the positioning in one discourse while the inviter held out an expectation of response from the position of a distinctly different discourse. And third, the existence as multi-being also creates points of intersections among the various discourses. The facticity of intersectionality

geometrically increases the available positions from which to respond in any given moment. So while discourse and discursive positioning influence relatedness, they are never determinate.

That being said, it is still the case that the more forcefully felt are the embedded relations of power that exist in particular discourse, the more compelling the position call. The more compelling the position call, the more limited the range of options for action, or as Bruner describes it, the "landscape of action" (Winslade & Monk, 2001, p. 163).

To understand what relations of power are and how they become expressed by, and embedded in, discourse and how that discourse positions people in ways that sustain and reproduce itself, I rely heavily on Michel Foucault's (1980) formulation of power/knowledge. Power/knowledge guides and often creates a sense of irresistible pull towards a certain type or pattern of relationships in a community. This same power/knowledge gets intertwined in community narratives and by doing so allows the relationships established in response to the discursive power to appear as normative. In circumstances like Greensboro, NC, many people see the relational patterns formed as being inequitable, unjust, unfair, and just inappropriate. And yet, the unseen workings of the relations of power, embedded in the various discourses through which those relationships are shaped, create a sense of powerlessness to change. Many of the previous efforts at community change were based in essentialist or structuralist analyses and did not concern themselves with discourse and offered an understanding of power that did not create new openings for action. Being able to unveil the workings of discourse – and by extension power – in communities is ultimately the framing that I use to assess the effectiveness of the methods of engagement developed in this study. Do those methods invite participants into the types of conversations that give an increased awareness and understandings of the operations of relations of power in their community? Does this new understanding then serve as a place for departure for community action?

After next considering Foucault's formulation of power, I will then describe Judith Butler's conceptualization of performativity. Butler's performativity ties together the role of discourse and discursive position and the roles of power in shaping the actions that comprise identity formation.

2.2 A Foucauldian Framing of Power/Knowledge

Michel Foucault was often thought of as taking "power" as the topic of his writings (Foucault, 1994). However, at the outset of a lecture that focused in theory on power, Foucault offered the following as description of his approach to the subject: (Quoting in relevant part)

> The ideas I discuss here represent neither theory nor a methodology.
>
> I would like to say, first of all, what has been the goal of my work during the last twenty years. It has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis.
>
> My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the differential modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subject …
>
> Thus it is not power, but the subject that is the general theme of my research.
>
> It is true that I became quite involved with the question of power. It soon appeared to me that, while the human subject is placed in relations of production and of signification, he is equally placed in power relations that are very complex…
>
> It was therefore necessary to expand on the dimensions of a definition of power if one wanted to use this definition in studying the objectivizing of the subject. (pp. 326-27)

In Foucault's formulation, there is no such entity as "power." Power is a relational phenomenon that exists only as exercised in relationship to others. According to Foucault, "What defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action that doesn't act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on possible or actual future or present actions" (p. 340). "Power", in the Foucauldian framing, is the ability to directly or indirectly influence, shape, or in a totalizing sense or the case of total domination, determine the present and future actions of others. Power has its effect not as a matter of consent or a renunciation of freedom or a transfer of rights, but, rather, in a person's exercise of what occurs as the person's choice or will. "Even though consent and violence are instruments or results, they do not constitute the principle or basic nature of power. [Power] operates on the field of possibilities in which the behavior of active subjects is able to inscribe itself." (p. 341)

Foucault contends that either directly or indirectly shaping the range of actual or perceived possible actions of another is a matter of power and that, when so constrained, guided, or compelled, a person becomes subjected to that relation of power. It is in becoming subject that the extent of a person's or a group's agency is constrained.

Agency is to be understood as the perceived or actual range of actions or the performative range that a person or group possesses or believes themselves to possess in any particular context. This sense of subjectivity, which Foucault argues is a result of the operations of relations of power, largely shapes the distribution of goods, services, and opportunities, and also establishes the values hierarchy of a particular community. The values hierarchy influences such aspects of community participation as when and where a person can be included or excluded from decision-making, when and to what subject the person has the right to speak and the right to be heard (which are not contiguous rights) (Cobb, 2013). There are many ways that objectivizing can occur, including institutional arrangements, community values, and traditions that shape expectations of relations. In understanding these various operations community members that are not satisfied with the current relational patterns that largely define their community experiences can begin to resist and reshape them.

The values, traditions, and institutional arrangements are established in response to the various discourses that circulate within a community. The values, traditions, and institutions then reproduce, validate, and affirm the discourses that produce them. They are also matters of culture and convention that contribute to the seeming immutability of the discourse and the unchanging nature of the relational patterns formed in response. There are three important features of understanding the Foucauldian framing of the operation of power that are particularly relevant to using this power framing as the hypothesis for community change: power is not uniformly effective; it is not always, or even most often, a repressive force; and because relations of power are embedded in discourse, the study of power is best conducted outside of individual relationships or institutional arrangements.

2.2.1 Power is not uniformly effective, constraining, or productive.

The actions and effects of power engender different responses from people who individually have some room to determine how if at all they will respond to the

discursive positions offered in the relations. As described in an earlier section, as multi-relational beings, people are most often found to occupy positions in several discourses at the same time and the priority or intersectionality among those discourses and the various position calls will have differential effects on each individual. Also, the effects of relations of power are always being resisted to some degree, up until the point where a total and stable domination is achieved. So, preparing a community to respond to the specific relations of power and to resist the mechanisms by which power operates in their context would benefit from an effective analysis of relations power. For purposes of understanding and changing a community context, a person or group's perceived range of available actions – that is, agency – is moreso defined or at least suggested inside of particular discourses in ways that make it appropriate to consider discursive power rather than only the power dynamics of individual relationships.

2.2.2 Foucault did not assume that all power was repressive.

Many operations of power are productive in the sense that they do not stop people from acting but rather they encourage people to act in certain ways. Often this productive power will result in people's actions that also produce, reproduce, or reinforce the relationships offered by the various power regimes. And in a cyclical manner one of the productive results of power is that people sometimes give their consent/assent to allowing the mechanism to have power in their context. Foucault was also particularly concerned with modes of power that operate outside of the legal modes or the institutional modes of understanding. By adopting this framing of power, community members can locate and expand their openings for action.

2.2.3 Study power from outside of individual relationships or institutional arrangements.

Finally, Foucault believed that power relationships can be best understood by focusing inquiry in certain ways and through consideration of certain areas of inquiry. With regard to the focus of inquiry, one must analyze institutions from the standpoint of power relations, rather than vice versa, and that the fundamental point of anchorage of the relationships, even if they are embodied and crystallized in an institution, is to be found outside of the institution (Foucault, 1994, p. 343).

With regard to the understanding of power through the study of individuals, Foucault (1994) hearkened back to Jeremy Bentham's notion of the panopticon to describe how power works outside the individual.

> Panopticism is one of the characteristic traits of our society. It is a type of power that's is applied to individuals in the form of continuous individual supervision, in the form of control, punishment, and compensation, and in the form of correction, that is, the molding and transformation of individuals in terms of certain norms. This threefold aspect of Panopticism – supervision, control, and correction – seems to be the fundamental and characteristic dimension of power relations that exist in our society. (p. 70)

Panopticism and its working occur outside the boundaries of individual relationships and yet it is an operation of power that guides and often constrains or produces certain behavior in people. Studying relations of power at the level of interpersonal exchange, according to Foucault, will obscure the effects of panopticism.

Similarly, trying to analyze power and its effects from within the operations of any particular institution or network of institutions will also obscure the workings of discursive power. Institutions of subjugation operate with four powers: economic, political, judicial, and epistemological (power to extract knowledge from and knowledge about individuals that are subject to power). While the institutions seem to possess and wield these powers, in fact, the powers wield the institutions that then become vehicles for the affirmation of the power established in discourse and embedded in institutional arrangements.

With regard to areas for inquiry, Foucault stressed that power is localized and contextual. In order to understand the specific operations of power in a context, an analysis of power relations demands a certain number of points be established: 1) dividing practices or *modes of inquiry* that have been employed historically to make human beings into subjects; 2) specifically naming the various *mechanisms that served, informed or established particular power relationships*; and 3) the *modes of struggle* against the operation of power. According to Foucault, understanding the modes of struggle is as important as understanding the mechanisms of power because every operation of power, until it reaches the stage of stable and total domination, always produces as a counterforce – a mode of struggle. The modes of

struggle point to a recognition of the operation of power and are a place from which to build counter forces.

It is the lack of sufficient perceived agency to define their own set of choices in individual relationships, institutional arrangements, and discursive forces that people experience as "oppressive", "marginalizing", "discriminatory", and so on. Models of community engagement that have been employed in the past have worked in modernist and structuralist philosophical stances that do not attend to discourse or the embedded power relations. In the lecture/essay entitled "Truth and Juridical Forms" (1994c, pp. 1-89), Foucault seems to directly reject both positivist and structuralist approaches to social analysis. In his critique of what he describes as "academic Marxism" he asserts that their approach to analysis is flawed.

> It seems to me that this form of analysis, traditional in university Marxism in France, exhibits a very serious defect—basically that assuming that the human subject, the subject of knowledge, and forms of knowledge themselves are somehow given beforehand and definitively, and that economic, social, and political conditions of existence are merely laid or imprinted on this definitely given subject. (pp. 1-2)

The approaches to change that these analytical models produce are flawed, Foucault asserts, in that they focus on the internal capacities of the individual (essentialism) and the reshaping of institutions (structuralism) as the way forward to achieving community change. Foucault proposes that shifting political conditions in a community, particularly when those conditions include persistent political and economic inequalities across some socially constructed divisions cannot be accomplished by an investigation that happens within the disciplinary confines of such disciplines as sociology, psychology, psychoanalysis, psychopathology, or criminology, because each of these disciplines "arose in direct conjunction with the formation of a certain number of political and social controls, during the forming of a capitalist society in the late 19th century" (p. 5).

It is somewhat paradoxical then that, in both of these approaches to community change, a certain approach to research and knowledge accumulation is central. To make the best argument for structural change, communities are encouraged to gain knowledge and information about political systems, economic structures, and so on. Foucault posits that the very knowledge accumulated is, in

fact, the operation of power and the affirmation of the relations of power established through that knowledge. Foucault (1994c) notices

> I have been trying to make visible the constant articulation I think there is of power on knowledge and of knowledge on power. We should not be content to say that power has need for a certain discovery, a certain form of knowledge, but we should add that the exercise of power creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information … The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power. *(pp. xv-xvi)*

This knowledge is based in the dividing practices and modes of differentiation that are allowing power to have its effects and are both justifying for and justified by the institutions that have been formed as product and reproducer of the discourses that shaped them. Understanding relations of power requires that analysis occur outside of the institution and the institutional forms.

As opposed to the forms of institutional knowledge that are often sought in order to conduct community analysis, Foucault identified five places to look for concrete examples of the operation of mechanisms of power in a particular set of relationships. The appropriate object of analysis, Foucault asserts, is not "power" itself but rather "power relations" – power relations that are distinct from objective capacities and relations of communications. The proposed areas of inquiry are: a. systems of differentiation; b. types of objectives pursued; c. instrumental modes; d. forms of institutionalization; and e. degree of rationalization (1994, p. 344).

One of the primary reasons that community change efforts must work to unveil operations of power is that, as Foucault noticed, "power is tolerable only on the condition that it masks a substantial part of its self. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (1976, p. 86). To paraphrase a line from *The Usual Suspects,* a movie starring Kevin Spacey that was popular in the 1990s, "the greatest trick [of power] is to convince the world that it doesn't exist." As we look to understand how power performs its work in communities it is worth also looking at performance and performativity of individuals and how those are shaped by power and discourse.

2.3 Foucault, Discourse, and Performance

Finally, when Foucault describes the results of the operations of power, he discusses the behavioral effects on people and also on their perception of the range of actions available to them. In seeking to overcome the negative effects of operations of power, Foucault recognizes that this too is a matter of behavior and the range of options for action. Liberation, says Foucault, is not a state of being, it is a performance:

> Liberty is a practice … The liberty of men [sic] is never assured by the institutions and laws intended to guarantee them. This is why almost all of these laws and institutions are quite capable of being turned around—not because they are ambiguous, but simply because 'liberty' is what must be exercised. (1994, p. 355)

In order to have a better sense of the performance and performative nature of being I turn now to the construct of performativity as presented by Judith Butler.

2.4 Performance or Performativity?

In Chapter I, I described one of the early insights that informed my approach to this work – the notion that before individuals learn a history or a narrative to inform their identity (feminism, African liberation, wealth and poverty, and so on) they learn how to perform the identity. My initial thinking and insights tended to follow along the lines of Ervin Goffman and others who theorize about role theory and the various persona that people adopt as they enter and as they continue to interact with society. It was my encounter with Judith Butler's performativity that caused me to reorient my thinking in alignment with my other influences. Butler starts from the observations of J. L. Austin and his consideration of performative speech acts. However, her notion of performativity, while incorporating Austin, also adopts Althusser's doctrine of interpellation and Foucault's observations about power and the discursive formation of subjects to articulate a new framing of performativity. While some of her later scholarship moves away from an emphasis on performativity and towards a concern for precarity, this new focus reinforces the sense of appropriateness of Butler's performativity as a key concept for the development of new methods for community engagement from a constructionist narrative perspective.

My intention in this section is to present a summary statement of Goffman's dramaturgic theory only to distinguish and ultimately dismiss it in favor of Butler's

conception of performativity. I will then offer an analysis of how Butler and a few other scholars that rely on her framing of performativity have used it in various contexts, and describe how it informs my current research.

2.4.1 Erving Goffman's performance.

In summarizing the major points of Erving Goffman's (1959, 1961, 1962) work, Mary Babcock (1989)states:

> The central assumption of the dramaturgic perspective is that in much of social activity individuals are concerned with giving 'good' performances. 'Good' does *not* refer to some moral or aesthetic ideal. Rather it refers to portraying the characters deemed appropriate in each particular scene in a convincing manner. Everyday social interaction is seen as a cooperative effort in staging and enacting an acceptable and convincing performance. Although the individual has the potential to portray any of the fairly large set of different characters or roles, in any particular interaction she will attempt to promote a particular image, and implicitly ask others to believe in the character she conveys. (p. 299)

In Goffman's theory, individuals lay claim to certain roles and then assume for themselves the rights and responsibilities embedded in the role claimed. For instance, if I take the role of adoptive "father" for a child that is not my own, the rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis that child would be different than if I took the role of adoptive "uncle" or "brother." Goffman's approach assumes that the self is the product of the interaction and not the cause of it.

> The imputed self is a product of a properly staged and performed scene which includes not only the individual's performance but also the cooperation of other individuals and staging effects that arise from the contribution of props (e.g., personal possessions) and settings. (Babcock, 1989, p. 299)

In response to many of the critiques of Goffman's perspective, Babcock seeks to preserve recognition of the value of his work by suggesting,

> We must not take the analogy of performance too literally. When we think of a theatrical performance, we usually think of actors portraying characters in whom they have little or no personal investment. However, in the type of performance that Goffman is referring to, the individual does have strong investment in the characters she attempts to convey, for

> each of those characters is a dramatization of certain aspects of herself as a whole. (Babcock, 1989, p. 300)

Goffman's perspective that notices the individual as a product of relationships in context has a surface appeal. It recognizes that meaning and even identity occur in co-action and in context. There is also an allusion to multi-being when Goffman describes the multiple character roles that a person might chose to take on. However, for a variety of reasons, particularly from a poststructuralist or constructionist perspective, Goffman's approach, while inviting in some respects, must ultimately be set aside in favor of a different framing. Goffman suggests that there is an already-and-always- existing inner being that a person seeks to represent through the many characters she takes on. Also, while Goffman does recognize context and setting as important in the capacity of the person to portray a certain character, the implication is that the meaning in the context, setting, staging and so on, is pre-existent, static and consistent. The dramaturgic perspective seems to merge a positivist and structuralist framing of identity and social roles in ways that invest substantial agency and choice at the level of the individual and do not yet recognize the role of culture, or power, or discursive forces.

However, choosing to set aside Goffman's dramaturgic perspective should not be seen as setting aside or in any way discounting or overlooking the tremendous contributions to community change that have been and can be made when theatre and performance models are part of the embodied community change work. I think here particularly of Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1985) and the many spinoff approaches to theatre and community engagement it has inspired: Michael Rohd's (1998) *Hope is Vital* and Gergen and Gergen's (2012) *Playing with Purpose.*

So while "performance" may be an excellent metaphor to initiate a conversation about community change and there are myriad performance practices that will support a community change agenda, 'performativity' as a more complex understanding of how behaviors are shaped, produced, and affirmed in a dialectic with discourse and power is a more advantageous framing. Because the concept of performativity has begun to have a variety of uses and interpretations, it is important to situate my research within a particular understanding of the concept – I have adopted Judith Butler's framing.

2.4.2 Judith Butler's performativity.

Judith Butler framed the concept of performativity in a way that has made a significant contribution to identity politics, cultural critique and cultural change. The focus of her work has been gender and sexuality and yet her work is applicable to all socially constructed aspects of identity, even if some identity markers have more significant involvement in the quality of lived experiences.

In her early works, Butler (1988) described "sex" as being given and "gender" as being constructed. She was concerned with the processes by which the fiction of gender was lodged in the body by virtue of certain corporeal acts that themselves constructed gender; and she questioned whether, through repetition of certain other actions, a cultural transformation of gender could be accomplished. In describing the origins and significance of these actions, Butler adopted the term "performativity"—first neologized by J. L. Austin (1962; also Miller, 2007). Butler's use of the term, while founded in an Austinian formulation, expanded on the concept. In describing the foundations of Butler's work related to the work of Austin and Erving Goffman, Ward and Winstanley (2005) noted:

> [Butler's] concept of performativity, which has its historical origins in the work of the linguistic philosopher, J. L. Austin (Hood-Williams and Harrison, 1998), takes the idea of performance, as expounded by Goffman (1969), and develops it in a linguistic sense by suggesting that much of language consists of performative utterances, 'in saying what I do, I perform the action' (Hood-Williams & Harrison, 1998). Austin was able to demonstrate the considerable extent to which language is used performatively … Performativity, according to Butler, should not be understood as a singular or deliberate 'act', but rather, as a reiterative and citational practice (Butler, 1993: 2) as shown by this example as it consists of both speech and an act, which can be cited and enacted again and again. The repetition is in the ceremony which is utilised far and wide, but going beyond Austin we would suggest the original vows are echoed every time a married couple proclaim, 'We are married' in speech and through actions such as the wearing of a ring. (p. 452)

As Butler seeks to describe the way that the construct of gender is created, reproduced and stabilized, she describes it as performance but then notes that the performance is not an expression of an internal pre-existing quality of femaleness, but rather a constant negotiation strategy.

> To be female is … a facticity which has no meaning, but to be a woman is to have become a woman, to compel the body to conform to an historical idea of 'woman,' to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in obedience to an historically delimited possibility, and to do this as a sustained and repeated corporeal project. The notion of a 'project,' however, suggests the originating force of a radical will, and because gender is a project which has cultural survival as its end, the term '*strategy*' better suggests the situation of duress under which gender performance always and variously occurs. Hence, as a strategy of survival, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences … Because there is neither an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires; because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. (Butler, 1988, p. 522)

In describing the forces that inform the corporeal acts that comprise a gender identity, Butler references Althusser's (1971) *doctrine of interpellation* and Foucault's (1976; 1982) conceptions of the role of discursive power in the formation of identity. Three features of this description fully align with Foucault's analysis of discourse and power. First, Butler notices the hidden nature of the compulsion to engender. This reflects what Foucault describes as a central feature of power: in order to stay powerful it must mask its own presence. Second, the nature of gender as having and requiring each individual to assume one of a limited number of forms is an example of what Foucault describes as a dividing practice, which is a key to self-subjectification. And finally, the adoption of identity markers and their associated performatives as a survival strategy recalls the Foucauldian notion of resistance and struggle against domination.

Butler's formulation of subjectification incorporates Althusser's (1971) doctrine of interpellation by describing the circumstance in which a subject comes into being as a result of a performative speech act and exists within the terms of its calling. Her formulation also incorporates Foucault's framing of power. Butler interprets Foucault as suggesting "that the point of modern politics is no longer to liberate the subject, but rather to interrogate the regulatory mechanisms through which subjects are produced and maintained" (1997a, pp. 31-32). To integrate all these concepts, she presents a compelling statement of the process of identity

formation, especially when considering my present effort to design models of engagement that can provide a foundation for significant community change.

> As a form of power, subjection is paradoxical. To be dominated by power external to oneself is a familiar and agonizing form power takes. To find, however, that what 'one' is, one's very formation as a subject, is in some sense dependent upon that very power is quite another. We are used to thinking of power as what presses on the subject from the outside, as what subordinates, sets underneath, and regulates to a lower order. This is surely a fair description of part of what power does. But, if following Foucault, we understand power as forming the subject as well, as providing the very condition of its existence and the trajectory of its desire, then power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence and what we harbor and preserve in the beings that we are….Subjection consists precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency. (1997a, pp. 1-2)

To make this point in an ever starker fashion, Butler later says:

> I am led to embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially. The self-colonizing trajectories of certain forms of identity politics are symptomatic of this paradoxical embrace of the injurious term. As further paradox then, only by occupying - being occupied by – that injurious term can I resist it and oppose it, recasting the power that constitutes me as the power I oppose. (p. 104)

Butler's formulation of identity as internal, and objectified, and then externalized, also recalls Berger and Luckmann's (1966) constructionist framing of the process of identity. While Butler's earlier work presented performativity and subjectification as its central concepts, she later began focusing on the notion of *precarity*. In describing the relationship between the two concepts Butler (2009) offers this distinction.

> Performativity was an account of agency, and precarity seems to focus on conditions that threaten life in ways that appear to be outside of one's control. Performative was about enactment. A certain way of being or appearing communicates the existence of certain internal or essential characteristics, which are often ascribed as being 'natural'. However, the appearance and enactment are reflections of an on-going negotiation with power … What do we call those who do not and cannot appear as

> "subjects" within hegemonic discourse? It seems to me that there are […] norms that in some ways condition what and who will be 'legible' and what and who will not. And we have to be able to take into account this differential allocation of recognizability. (pp. i-ii)

Butler's performativity and precarity are about terms of existence. Performativity describes the circumstances of those for whom an interpellation has called them into being, even if primarily on the terms and under the limits of the caller. Precarity describes those for whom no one calls and so they struggle against invisibility and non-existence, which represents a non-existence, but still in the frame and under the terms of the potential caller. Many individuals and communities that seek to change conditions are, following Butler, seeking first to exist and then to exist on terms by which they have more agentic contribution to defining the terms of their existence. Butler's performativity and precarity help inform our work under these conditions.

Some critics of Butler's work think that while she fails to do so, it is important to 'disambiguate' her conceptualization of performativity from that of both Austin and Derrida. Miller (2007) asserts that

> [O]ne must discriminate quite sharply among different notions of performativity. We must disambiguate them in order to avoid confusion of thought. We must resist thinking that gender socially constructed by performativity is like an Austinian promise or that either is like a Derridean performative response, a saying yes to the wholly other, or that the performance of a Mozart piano sonata is like any of these. (p. 226)

While I agree that confusion of thought is not helpful, there is a social space in which Butler's gender performativity and Austin's speech act are actually of the same kind. For instance, Ward and Winstanley (2005) describe the overlap of Austinian and Butlerian performativity in the act of *coming out* – publically declaring one's sexuality:

> Sexual identity is performative because coming out means taking up a subject position, which, theoretically at least, is a fiction. It is also performative because the declaration is a performative act (Butler, 1997). The concept of performativity emphasizes that much of language consists of performative utterances where discourse becomes social practice, or, in other words, talk becomes action. It is in the repetitive nature of this action that the practice becomes performative, as in every new situation

> and faced with new contacts, the coming out process has to be repeated [...] By studying this repetitive action, expressed as social practice, the researcher is able to identify the means through which discourse produces its effects. (p. 453)

Although both Butler and Ward and Winstanley focus their attention on the performativity of gender and sexual identity, the same effects of performativity are involved when someone declares themselves Black or White or Muslim or immigrant or liberal, or not. It is this notion of performativity that leaves us with culturally intelligible statements like, "She's acting White", or, "He is acting so gay." This same Austinian/Butlerian performativity informs both the subject position taken up by and the discursive positions offered to the first bi-racial President of the United States, Barack Hussein Obama, and by the highest ranked and highest paid golfer in the world, Eldrick "Tiger" Woods, who is "Caublinasian." There is not a measure of truth or falsity to be tested in those utterances, rather the utterance establishes the landscape upon which the person's action horizon is established. When persons identify in a particular category according to race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on, they are in effect *coming out* by taking up a subject position. When a community seeks to change the quality of lived experiences for those who occupy certain subject positions, Butler would cause us to ask the question: "Is it possible to accomplish the cultural shifts we seek given that the power that creates and reproduced their (all of our) conditions is also the power that constitutes their identity?"

Performance and performativity are two concepts that, while often discussed interchangeably, are distinct. And it is in the distinction that the two concepts are both useful to the process of community change. Similarly, there are conceptualizations of discourse and narrative that do not fully distinguish the two concepts. Failing to sufficiently distinguish the two minimizes the potential effects of applying both discursive theory and narrative theory and practice to the work of community change. The current research relies on both discursive and narrative theories and practices. I have previously described discourse and the work of discourse in the earlier section in relationship to the theories of Michel Foucault. In the next section, I will present the aspects of narrative theory and practice that I am applying to this current project.

2.5 Narrative

Narrative is a broad field of study with diverse foundational disciplinary traditions and many theoretical, practical and analytical applications. Narrative could be considered from the perspective of anthropology, rhetoric, literature, linguistics, psychology and psychoanalysis, discourse studies, or any number of other approaches. Ochs and Capps (1996) state that

> Counter to a prevalent ideology of disembodied objectivity, even scientific narratives can be personal in tone. Scientists, for example, routinely construct oral narratives of procedures and interpretations, casting themselves and others as protagonists. Culture and gender studies scholars have advocated written scientific narratives with subjects who reflexively situate and resituate themselves with respect to the objects they are visualizing. While differing in complexity and circumstance, narratives transform life's journeys into sequences of events and evoke shifting and enduring perspectives on experience. (pp. 19-20)

In fact, it might be more accurate to say that narrative is not a field of study, but rather a subject of inquiry.

Narrative, the practice of connecting events in life and history through the model of story, is a human practice that has been in use since the earliest developments of language and community. Even the notions of language and community are concepts that have their intelligibility from inside a narrated retelling of what might otherwise have been random events sequenced in time. Narratives are the basic form of human transaction that allows us to offer rationale and the perception of order in our world (Parry & Doan, 1994). Jerome Bruner (1986) suggests that there are only two ways of thinking – paradigmatic and narrative. *Paradigmatic* is the scientific measurement-oriented way of speaking, which answers questions such as, "What category?" and "How many?" *Narrative*, on the other hand, orients both the speaker and listener in space and time (which are both narrative constructs) and responds to questions like, "Why?"

Ochs and Capps (1986) also describe narrative as the ground upon which people are able to create a sense of the self.

> The inseparability of narrative and self is grounded in the phenomenological assumption that entities are given meaning through being experienced and the notion that narrative is an essential resource in the struggle to bring experiences to conscious awareness. At any point in

> time, our sense of entities, including ourselves, is an outcome of our subjective involvement in the world. Narrative mediates this involvement. Personal narratives shape how we attend to and feel about events. They are partial representations and evocations of the world as we know it. From this perspective, narratives are versions of reality. They are embodiments of one or more points of view rather than objective, omniscient accounts. (1996, p. 30)

Ochs and Capp further explain conditions that are given psychological and psychiatric diagnosis, such as post-traumatic stress and multiple personality disorders, as moderate to severe failures to integrate events into a coherent life narrative (1996, p. 30).

> Every telling provides narrators and listener/readers with an opportunity for fragmented self-understanding. Each telling of a narrative situated in time and space engages only facets of a narrator's or listener/reader's selfhood in that it evokes only certain memories, concerns, and expectations. In this sense, narratives are apprehended by *partial* selves, and narratives so apprehended access only fragments of experience … In these ways, narratives have the potential to generate a *multiplicity* of partial selves. (p. 22)

This notion of the multiplicity of partial selves is reflective of the constructionist principle of multi-being or the multi-relational self. Each self is constructed from a mix audiences (actual, absent, and virtual) and discourses. Each self reflects its own perspective and temporality because the particular relational selves emerged in the context of relationships which themselves occurred at differing times, progressing towards different ends. Trying to describe the process of narrating the self at the individual level could create the false impression that narration of the self is done by the self. The multiple selves are byproducts of the intersectionality of existing community and cultural narratives. Individuals select which strands of each narrative they will take on, when they seek to present a sense of individuality. And while individuality among the various strands might be achieved, it is much less likely that an individual will produce a new and wholly distinct narrative strand free of all existing community narratives and unframed by extant discourse. Even if it were possible to achieve a wholly distinct narrative, that narrative would draw on the same discursive material that other existing narratives have relied on. In that way it

would be interdependent with the present stock of narratives that construct everyone and everything the narrator encounters.

Only by teasing out the differences between narrative and discourse can we understand the interrelatedness of the two and design methodology that allows us to operate in and through both narrative and discursive practices. Spatial/temporal orientation, perspective, and responsiveness to the teleological are important distinctions between narrative and discourse. Narrative organizes events and transmits a proposed meaning from person to person. Narratives, while continuous and ever present, also shift over time. Discourse is less flexible. Discourse establishes an orientation to facts and events in the sense of establishing an *oughtness*.

With regard to responding to the teleological questions, Gergen (2009a), citing narrative theorist Paul Ricoeur, suggests that "explanation must… be woven into the narrative tissue" (p. 38). In addition to explanation, other scholars of narrative highlight the two other basic dimensions of narrative: temporality and point of view (Ochs & Capps, 1996, pp. 25-26).

2.6 How Narrative and Performative Principles Shaped My Work in Greensboro

In the following passage I quote liberally from Ochs and Capp (1996). In their description of *narrating the self*, they effectively describe the context of Greensboro. Their description also explains how the failure of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission to achieve a narrative resolution of that community conflict has contributed to the sense of dis-ease among the residents. Ultimately this analysis also alludes to possible methodological responses.

When presented with contested narratives, Ochs and Capps (1996) identify two competing impulses that individuals and communities face: either to allow multiple narratives to co-exist or to produce a singular unified narrative. While achieving consensus is indeed a positive outcome, there is a potential problematic with a unified narrative. Ochs and Capps argue that

> Adherence to a dominant narrative is community-building in that it presumes that each member ascribes to the common story. Reliance solely on a dominant narrative, however, may lead to over-simplification, stasis, and irreconcilable discrepancies between the story one has been inculcated with and one's encounters in the world. (p. 32)

The achievement of a dominant narrative can also be problematic if it was achieved through marginalization of certain voices or silencing through various modes of relations of power (Ochs & Capps, 1996; Trouillot, 1995; Solorzano, 1997). It is access to control or at least contribution to larger community narratives that are at the heart of struggles for recognition and value. Having your experience or the experience of your group included in the larger community narratives is a measure of the extent to which your group is subject on its own terms or positioned by others. On this point Ochs and Capps conclude

> Differential control over narrative content, genre, timing, and recipiency is central to the constitution of social hierarchies. Narrative practices reflect and establish power relations in a wide range of domestic and community institutions. Differential control over content, genre, timing, and recipiency is also critical to the selves that come to life through narrative. (p. 33)

What Ochs and Capp describe are precisely the struggles of many residents in the Greensboro community. Official voices and communication mechanisms were able to delegitimize the results of the TRC. The stories presented as part of that process were delegitimized by association to the process in which they were told. There were also privileged hearers who chose not to listen or not give feedback. There are discursive forces and the types of powers that Foucault (1994) catalogues (division, economic privilege, silencing) that were able to shape the expectation for the way the story could be told; and there was a struggle with the Civil and Human Rights Museum as to whether, and if so how, the story of 1979 could be told. The economic, political and media forces that seemed to collude – or at the very least cooperate - in the framing of the story have created a dominant narrative that both silences and marginalizes certain communities and perspectives almost to the point of invisibility.

This research is situated in social constructionism with an attention to discourse, positioning, narrativity, and performance because it is in this context that new ways of action can emerge. In considering how social construction, performativity, and narrative apply to situations deemed to be oppressive, Friedmann (2006) observes:

> Social constructionism is the theoretical approach of accounting for something by construing its nature and existence as the product, in some

> sense, of social relationships, practices, and discourses. Social constructionism is a particularly hopeful approach to take toward anything we regard as wrong or bad because if we find that something bad is a social construct rather than being that way independently of social practices, then we can try to change it socially or, at least, to construct it differently next time around. … If oppressive practices and oppressed identities turn out to be social constructs, then they would be the products of social relationships that could conceivably be under human control, and we could plausibly hope to change them through human intervention. Social constructionism suggests that whatever is oppressive … is not inevitable or unchanging and can be made better by human beings acting differently. (p. 182)

The action that communities can take is both in behavior and in language, and the work to assist communities is through facilitating the noticing of the intersecting work of multiple discourses in the meaning making and relationship shaping occurring in the community. "The dialectics of *inter-discursive processes* imply that a previous discourse is present in latter discourse. That is, discursive practices are interrelated" (Schaffner & Wenden, 1999, p. 123). There is a way in which embedding or lacing the language of the present discourse with images and metaphors of earlier discourse stabilizes both discourses and supports more rigid ideological positions. The inter-discursive relationship with this historic moment (1979), the moments from the Civil Rights period, and the present allegations of police misconduct alongside the experiences of unequal economic development while the city enjoys a world-wide reputation as a progressive southern city reflects the type of narrative asymmetry that recreates the sense of selves and community. Ochs and Capps do suggest, however, that these circumstances can be changed:

> Narrative asymmetries do not preclude narrative acts of resistance. Narratives are co-authored and as such allow for the possibility that particular contributions will be challenged. Such challenges require positive uptake to successfully neutralize the status quo. Reestablishing asymmetries in the face of narrative challenges demands effectively issuing a counterchallenge or otherwise managing dissent through minimization or suppression. (p. 35)

The goal of this research then is to introduce two dialogic methods that use narrative practices and attend to the narrative and discursive forces that shape much of the lived experience of the Greensboro community. But there will be great

challenges. Narratives employ language. What is not always clear is that the speaker does not have unlimited or unfettered control of the language available to her to construct reality or to relay the meanings she seeks to relay. Foucault (1976), in discussing discourse and power/knowledge, describes the many ways that institutions – legal, religious, educational, and so on – can determine the language that is available to narrate a set of connected events. Over time and with repetition, certain linguistic constraints and representations are related to as taken-for-granted realities. Embedded in these taken-for-granted realities are expectations, limitations, responsibilities, and entitlements that also appear as taken-for-granted realities. The linguistic forms in which these taken for granted realities are employed – or assumed – determine what can be said, and when, to whom, in what context, in what tone of voice, and which are the appropriate body movements and facial gestures to accompany this usage. In time there occurs a point at which the speaker is no longer using the language but is rather being spoken by the language. And it is in the being-used-by state that communications occur and self and collective identities are being *narrated*.

Discursive forces inform the available uses of language. Discursive powers are also, following Butler, what constitutes self and collective identities and against which individuals and collectives resist. To complicate matters, discursive forces create the perception of the normality of the taken-for-granted-"ness" of societal orders.

Discourse is created over the process of many conversations and involves a multifaceted connected web of related and tangential conversations in ways that lend a sense of stability. Further, discourses cannot be shifted in one single conversation, and yet it is in conversation that discursive positions can be shifted and when these positions can be shifted in sustaining patterns over time discourse itself can shift. Discourse then is shifted through the same apparatus through which it is maintained. It is destabilized with some of the same apparatus with which it is perpetuated.

These are among the reasons I propose employing narrative practices that attend to discursive forces as a central feature of those methods that will offer hope of significant achievement for communities, like Greensboro.

Section II

In this section I define the remaining constructs critical to this inquiry. Certain important constructs have already been defined: specifically, discourse and discursive positioning, narrative, and power. The other constructs that the reader will benefit from having a sense of how I am using terms include: racism/race, counter-story, trauma, legacy, aftermath, and narrative compression. An extensive consideration of the considerable body of literature describing this second set of constructs is both outside the scope of this review and unnecessary for the reader to appreciate their applicability to this work and therefore their full analysis is beyond the scope of this study.

2.7 Additional Constructs Critical to My Argument

The first several definitions are taken directly from one of my earlier writings (Hooker & Czjaikowski, 2012). They were developed in support of Coming to the T.A.B.L.E./Healing Historical Harms, an earlier project described in Chapter I as part of my journey.

2.7.1 Trauma.

The word *trauma* is a Greek word (noun), which means *wound* or *injury*. I will refer to trauma as the set of reactions and responses to an event or circumstance experienced as overwhelming. When an event or set of circumstances, sudden or ongoing, large or small and cumulative, is perceived to threaten an individual or community and overwhelms the individual or collective capacity to respond, humans have three typical, instinctual reactions: fight, flight or freeze. This sense of overwhelm has biological, emotional, behavioral, spiritual and societal consequences, which can remain if not healed. It is important to recognize that an event can be overwhelming to some but not all who experience the same event or set of circumstances, which is why it is important to distinguish between trauma as response and traumagenic as the catalyst for trauma responses.

2.7.2 Traumagenic.

Traumagenic is an adjective that I coined to describe an event that is likely to cause the sense of overwhelm that results in the performance of trauma responses. It takes into account the understanding of trauma as a *response* to an event. The event itself is (or in the case of trauma generated by cumulative events, the circumstances are) the originating source, or genesis, of the trauma reaction rather than the actual

trauma. An event that results in trauma responses would then be described as *traumagenic*. Individuals and communities can have a variety of different responses to an event, and some individuals and communities might respond with strengthened capacities, which is itself also a performed response to a traumagenic experience.

2.7.3 Historical trauma.

Historical Trauma is a term coined by Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart that refers to an event or complex set of events that impacted a significant segment of society or an entire populace. Historical Trauma, according to Brave Heart (2003), is "the collective emotional and psychological injury both over the life span and across generations … emanating from massive group trauma" (p. 8). Often, historical trauma is also cultural trauma (see below) in the sense that a complex set of traumagenic events, policies and practices were directed at a segment of society because of some specific distinguishing feature of that group (for example, race, ethnicity, belief, gender, sexuality, and so on).

2.7.4 Multigenerational transmission of trauma.

Multigenerational transmission of trauma is a description of trauma responses that in turn create traumagenic circumstances for others, thus passing the trauma on to subsequent generations. Trauma responses may take the form of abuse, neglect, and other likely trauma causing behaviors, but they also may take the form of dignity-destroying beliefs and structures created in response to trauma that in turn create trauma for others. The structural dimension of the transmission of multigenerational trauma expands the concept of historical trauma, which mostly refers to emotional and psychological injury that is passed between generations and usually only refers to those who have been named *victims*. However, because trauma responses are performative, some people will learn to perform the trauma response without any awareness of the traumagenic source. In this way trauma is performed by many in a community and not exclusively the *victim*.

2.7.5 Legacy and Aftermath.

In relationship to the multi-generational transmission of trauma, legacy is the collection of beliefs, ideas, myths, prejudices, biases and behaviors that are disseminated and then inherited by and/or about differing groups. Aftermath refers

to the institutions, laws, political and economic structures and the official narrative conveyed and enforced by a society's supporting systems (education, religion, social services, criminal justice, and so on) that were formed to enforce or reinforce particular aspects of a legacy (pp. 18-26).

The following conceptualizations are not from the *Transforming Historical Harms* manual.

2.7.6 Cultural trauma.

Alexander (2012) offers an explanation for how trauma becomes collective and cultural that aligns with a constructionist framing and incorporates allusions to both narrative and discursive principles.

> For traumas to emerge at the level of the collectivity, social crises must become cultural crises. Events are one thing; representations of those events are quite another. Trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity. Collective actors *decide* to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to the sense of who they are, where they came from, and where they want to go (p. 15).

With regard to the trauma's effect on identity, Alexander supposes:

> Experiencing trauma can be understood as a sociological process that defines the painful injury to the collectivity, establishes the victims, attributes responsibility, and distributes the ideal and material consequences. Insofar as traumas are so experienced and thus imagined and represented, the collective identity will shift. This reconstruction means there will be a searching re-remembering of the collective past, for memory is not only socially fluid but also deeply connected to the contemporary sense of self. Identities are continuously constructed and secured not only by facing the present and future but also by reconstructing the collectivity's earlier life. (p. 26)

2.7.7 Damaged identities.

Nelson (2001) argues that identities are narratively constructed. Focusing on the effects of unjust social group relations, Nelson argues that "the master narratives used by dominant groups to justify the oppression of a less powerful group falsify and distort the group's identity by depicting the group – and therefore all of its members- as morally subnormal" (p. 106) She further argues that "because group

identities are complex narrative structures of meaning, oppressive master narratives cause… the damage of distorting and poisoning people's self-conception and their beliefs about who they and other people are" (p. 108).

Following Berger and Luckmann's (1966) notion of the three moments of the construction of identity – internalization, objectivation, and externalization – Nelson describes the results of internalizing some or all of the caustic narrative as *acquiring an infiltrated consciousness***.** Finally she argues that these dominant master narratives "crowd out, distort, discount, or make unavailable alternative stories that the subgroup might tell from the first person perspective" (pp. 106-107). Her proposal for responding to the effects of the dominant master narratives is by building effective "counterstories."

2.7.8 Counterstories.

Nelson (2001; also Bell, 2003) describes a counterstory as one "that resists an oppressive identity and attempts to replace it with one that commands respect … Through their capacity for narrative repair of identities damaged by oppression, counterstories can provide a significant form of resistance to the evil of diminished moral agency" (pp. 6-7). Nelson describes counterstories as working on the person's image of themselves and presenting the possibility of the "Other," reconceptualizing them based on the reconstructed story. Although she does not describe the work in terms of discourse or discursive positioning, it is clear that the work of the counterstory is directly related to the process of shifting discursive positions. Deconstructing the dominant narratives and unveiling the suppressed, or following Foucault, subjugated, knowledges also creates openings in narrative. This process would be described by Cobb (2013) as an aspect of narrative decompression.

2.7.9 Narrative Compression.

Cobb (2013) coined the term *narrative compression* to refer to the condition in which

> (a) the dominant narrative in a given location/community consolidates and compacts itself, compressing nuanced differences or variations that could otherwise provide an opening for inquiry, thus leading to destabilization; and (b) the possible 'openings' are not only closed off but their denial and erasure have been ritualized in interaction such that any effort by a speaker to open the narrative to inquiry triggers 'routines' that

> thwart the development of a subordinate storyline. Together, these two conditions contribute to create, in the public sphere, narrative compression – the master or dominant narrative controls the narrative field by condensing available discursive resources, and harnessing them to the production of its own stability. (pp. 266-67)

To counteract the condition of narrative compression, Cobb proposes that "*reconciliation*, designed with a narrative lens, can contribute to reverse narrative compression in the public sphere" (p. 267). With regard to narrative, Cobb offers a different framing than Nelson's counterstory, and yet it has the same trajectory for the repair of damaged identities and undoing of oppressive narratives. Cobb advances the idea that what is needed is a *better-formed story* (pp. 223-227). Cobb credits Sluzki (1990) with first articulating the concept of the better-formed story for use in the realm of family therapy (p. 203n). She then adopts it for conflict resolution, and I, in turn am appropriating it for community transformation.

2.7.10 Racism/Race.

The construct of racism/race is written and presented in this way to represent the idea that the concepts are indistinguishable. *Race* is a social construction that has come to have a specific set of meanings in racialized societies. Those meanings and the dimensions of race are values propositions in support of and through the work of the ideology of racism. A number of scholars from a variety of perspectives make this same point. As an example, Esonwanne (1992) says

> As a concept, race is plurisemous. Its referents are not limited to visible morphological markers of difference. Social behavior, psychological profiles, economic activities, aesthetic forms-these are some of the many indicators by which racial identities are assigned or withheld, claimed or rejected, celebrated or deprecated. In racialized nation states (like the United States and Canada), race can be quite hazardous. Participation in or exclusion from various sectors of national life – the economy, politics, education, recreation, the arts – may depend on the racial identity assumed by or even assigned to individuals or groups of individuals. To speak, therefore, of race in contexts such as these is not merely to address oneself to an abstract concept. Rather, it is to intervene actively in a discursive field that is highly charged by a sense not only of past and ongoing grievances but also of present investments. Thus the paradigm shifts from the science of race to the hermeneutics of the implications of race in culture. (p. 565)

In a similar vein, and yet from a different historical reference point, Smedley and Smedley (2005) argue that

> Psychological science has a long and controversial history of involvement in efforts to measure and explain human variation and population differences. Psychologists such as Jensen (1974), Herrnstein (Herrnstein & Murray, 1996), and more recently, Rushton (1995) and Rowe (Rowe, 2002; Rowe & Cleveland, 1996) have advanced the argument that racial group variation on measures such as intelligence tests reflects genetically determined differences in group ability that cannot be explained by differences in environmental living conditions or socioeconomic differences. ... The consensus among most scholars in fields such as evolutionary biology, anthropology, and other disciplines is that racial distinctions fail on all three counts — that is, they are not genetically discrete, are not reliably measured, and are not scientifically meaningful. Yet even these counterarguments often fail to take into account the origin and history of the idea of race. This history is significant because it demonstrates that race is a fairly recent construct, one that emerged well after population groups from different continents came into contact with one another. (2005, p. 18)

Smedley and Smedley also distinguish race from culture and note that, with regard to culture, there is a clear constructionist origin. They then describe the evolution of the ideology, policies, and practices that sought to establish as reality the hierarchy otherwise only existent in the ideology. After tracing the history of immigration in North America in which the Irish, Italians, and other non-English Europeans were originally considered a different race but then eventually assimilated into "Whiteness", Smedley and Smedley describe the official political and institutional practices used to maintain distinctions in the so-called races. "There is mounting historical evidence that this modern ideology of race took on a life of its own in the latter half of the 19th century (Hannaford, 1996; A. Smedley, 1999b). As a paradigm for portraying the social reality of permanent inequality as something that was natural, this ideology, often but not necessarily connected to human biophysical differences, has been perceived as useful by many other societies" (Smedley & Smedley, 2005, p. 20)

One hallmark of narrative practice in both therapy and mediation is the practice of deconstructive listening (Winslade & Monk, 2008). This practice follows

Derrida's conceptualization of *deconstructive inquiry*, which aims to listen to what is said and what is not said but is necessarily understood in order for that which is said to make sense (Winslade & Monk, p. 9). In a binary formulation – good and evil, black and white, left and right, and so on – if one term is spoken the existence of the other is implied in order for the one spoken to have meaning. In this way, a tripartite racial classification in some countries like South Africa seems to call into question the facticity of the binary system that is foundational for certain racialized societies like the United States. Similarly, the system of classification that exists in certain cultures where morphology (negro, blanco, moreno) or presumed percentage of African blood (quadroon, octoroon, and so on) is utilized questions even the facticity of the tripartite system. All of these systems support different variations on the fiction of race. Unveiling this descriptive limitation would seem to establish the fragility or point to the outer limits of coherence of binary system. The fragility highlights the idea that the system supports and is supported by particular power regimes, which points to where a community might act in resisting the effects.

As long as people cooperate with the dividing practice in whatever formulation is culturally sanctioned, the relations of power manifest in and reproduced by that classification system will be sustained. People who *come out* by identifying as belonging to one or the other of these categories assume the subject positions established by the discourse of that category. The limitation and fragility of the category is on clear display when *colored* South Africans have to come to the United States and lose their colored status. Because the binary model is applied in the U.S., they will have to – and they are able to – choose the subject position that they will assume. Because the one drop rule is in effect in the U.S., and not in many other parts of the world, notably Central and South American countries, a Black American will be re-classified – blanca, negra, mestiza, morena, and so on, depending on a morphological characteristic (skin color) that is only interesting but non-determinative in the U.S.

There is an extensive body of scholarship that establishes race as a social construct (Esonwanne, 1992; Smedley & Smedley, 2000; Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Taliaferro, Casstevens, & Gunby, 2013; Solorzano, 1997). For a comprehensive consideration of the scholarship, including extensive references to original source documents, I would refer the reader to *The Invention of the White Race: Racial*

Oppression and Social Control, volumes I and II (Allen, 2012). Unfortunately, there is a lingering body of historical scholarship that was developed in paradigms that were designed to establish the *truth* of the racial fiction. This scholarship was the basis for arguing that the performative qualities of Blackness were, in fact, *expressions* of an essential nature that nature being inferior to Whiteness. This same historical scholarship and the mindsets associated with it are the basis for many of the early programs designed to improve the conditions of Africans in America or improve relationships among the so called races.

The programs were designed to improve Black people or to demonstrate that, within the innate qualities of Blackness, there were positive qualities. Over time, due to emergence of structuralism as a stance influenced by many Marxist and socialist scholars, there was a changing paradigm that aimed to identify the distinctions in conditions and quality of life among different *races* as the direct result of oppressive societal structures and institutions. Alternatively, there was an effort to identify the cultural deficiencies in marginalized communities that would explain, even if not justify, the differential lived experienced (Lamont & Small, 2010). The racial equality efforts that were framed on the basis of this *scientific* foundation focused on institutional operations, structural and policy changes.

2.8 Approaches to Race Relations and Achieving Equity

Here I offer only a brief introduction and explanation of four orientations to the work of improving the lived experience of racial differences or to racial *reconciliation*. These are each perspectives and approaches that I have been directly involved in at some level, either as a volunteer leader or as a professional pursuit.

2.8.1 Connection and understanding.

The first category of engagement and change models focuses on **connection and understanding** (coalition building, dialogue, multi-racial leadership immersion programs, and so on). Public Conversations Project (www.pcp.org), Initiatives of Change/Hope in the Cities (http://www.us.iofc.org/hope-in-cities-iofc), and Coming to the Table (www.comingtothetable.org) each operates with very similar principles and intentions, namely to connect people through dialogue, shared experience, and understanding. Through various engagement methodologies including talking, performance, shared learning, etc., people develop an increased awareness and, it is hoped, an appreciation of the perspective of others who are

culturally different from themselves. The invitation is usually couched in the same language: "you are invited to participate and share, but not to change or be fixed." While such an invitation may be attractive for many, it also allows people to avoid taking any action. The theory of change seems to be that if enough people know about and appreciate people different from themselves, the community – through the infusion of better and more aware members--will itself be improved. These programs offer a wide range of tolerance and encouragement for difficult dialogue, conflict, and controversy.

While such programs' action orientation may often be limited, dampened, or non-existent, I am convinced that programs with an orientation towards dialogue and connection can provide well-constructed engagement experiences for participants to share in co-active meaning making.

2.8.2 Societal transformation through education.

The second grouping of programs proposes **personal and societal transformation through education** efforts such as a class curriculum, local history celebrations, history with mass apology, and so on. It is best represented in the forms of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance program (www.tolerance.org) and Roosevelt Thomas's American Institute for Managing Diversity (http://www.rthomasconsulting.com/), which are built upon an implied theory of change that if people know more about another's culture and life experience, they will be more *tolerant* of one another.

The approach does not require or even base its model on any expectation of cross-cultural interchange and experience because intolerance is considered the problem. Intolerance, it is supposed, is based on lack of information or misinformation, so intolerance can be diminished and eliminated by filling the education and knowledge gap. "If they knew better, they'd do better," is the folk quip that summarizes this approach's theory of change.

Its clear limitation is that it actually replicates and subtly reinforces the dynamics in current societal relational patterns and institutional practices. This approach gives responsibility and even permission to the privileged classes to make *space* for others to express their cultural identities. A second drawback is that, unlike the direct dialogue described in the second connection and understanding approach, cultures are taught with generalized representations, which are of necessity both flat

and stereotypical, lacking the authenticity of personal stories. The model of education for change and social transformation also obscures the real work of systems, policies, and laws and seeks to make societal change through interpersonal awareness and conscientization. Even with all of the aforementioned limitations, however, there is some value in considering history, particularly in understanding the role of policy and relational practices in the development of modern social arrangements.

2.8.3 Coercive power dynamics.

Coercive power dynamics, the third approach, includes legal and structural challenges of all stripes, including civil rights and reparations. Coercive mechanisms also include political campaigns, boycotts, and other community organizing campaigns. What the various models I have categorized as coercive have in common is that each draws on an available authority to compel the perceived offenders and oppressive institutions to conform their behavior in certain ways. For instance, civil rights litigation relies on the use of a specific interpretation of the Constitution and other laws of the country or states to require a shift in behavior. Such approaches are coercive in the sense that they do not require any shift in beliefs or values or any measure of agreement among those whose behavior will be required to change. Rather, the force of law that includes legislative action, economic sanctions, military and police action can be brought to bear to reshape unacceptable behaviors. This is the same principle employed by various reparations advocacy groups (http://ictj.org/our-work/transitional-justice-issues/reparations; www.ncobra.org).

Boycott efforts are also coercive in the sense that the imposition of economic hardship through sustained collective action is designed to result in behavior changes without concern for changes in individual or societal belief and value systems. The enduring lesson from this set of approaches is that action is necessary to make change.

Within the coercive power-based change group, there were two camps: radical/cynicals and moderate/hopefuls. The radical/cynical camp, while arguing that the lived experience of the races was primarily the result of structural issues, still held that the essential nature of the White man was racist. The radical cynical camp argued for radical political and structural change and also encouraged the building of separate structures including separate states and repatriation to Africa and the

Caribbean. This camp would include such notables as Marcus Garvey, the Black Panther Party, and The Nation of Islam led by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad (pbuh), and Malcom X (El Hajji Malik al Shabazz) (pbuh). The radical/cynicals also had a foundational distrust for the potential goodwill or alliance with Whites and so Whites were excluded and treated with both suspicion and contempt. The moderate/hopeful camp – for which Martin Luther King, Jr. and Justice Thurgood Marshall are the primary symbols – argued for substantial change and also for the innate goodness of all people. There was also some trust in the systems, and, so as opposed to advocating separation or radical overthrow, the moderate/hopefuls worked within the legal and political institutional constraints. This allowed – even urged – them to form alliances across racial and class boundaries.

Behavior changes and institutional arrangements must necessarily be shifted in order for the lived experiences to be different. But action approaches based on coercion tend to inspire resistance and induce a pendulum effect in conditions where there will be some signs of improvement and then retrenchment.

2.8.4 Trauma healing.

The fourth category of models seeks to allow people to *heal* from the trauma and damage they have experienced through the oppressive and marginalizing relationships and encounters they have had in their lives. It is asserted that all people are born whole, complete, and perfect, and that they get damaged by the intentional and unintentional actions of others. Such approaches assert that an individual's emotions are outgrowths of their meaning-making process. Programs including the National Coalition Building Institute (www.NCBI.org), Re-evaluation Counseling (www.rc.org), and Werner Earhart's Forum, now the Landmark Forum (www.landmarkworldwide.com/*)* create opportunities for emoting and expressing the damage and life limitations arising from our interpretations of those experiences. These programs are often equally attractive to those who feel themselves or who have been stereotyped as coming from oppressive groups as to those who feel themselves or who have been prejudicially labeled as oppressed. Program participants often describe themselves as experiencing psychic release from learning how they were damaged and being given the opportunity for an emotive performance of some sort.

If the programs promoting Trauma Healing were based in Alexander's (2012) framing of Cultural Trauma as described earlier, this would begin to incorporate the

discursive and performative aspects of trauma that allow it to be reproduced across multiple generations. Further, like the other models, the healing models do not require and often do not encourage action. The experience of trauma is performance in response to an experience that is interpreted as being overwhelming. Performance, repeated over time and modified for multiple contexts becomes a performative aspect of (a group of) people's identities. This performativity gets embedded in the identities and actually shapes, reshapes or reproduces certain discourses. This reflects what Nelson conceptualizes as damaged identities in need of and only responsive to narrative repair.

Many programs operate as hybrids of the four approaches. For instance, the "Undoing Racism" program of the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (http://www.pisab.org/) focuses on education about a certain framing of power designed to serve as the basis for both personal transformation and organizing for coercive approaches to change. The People's Institute's central operating principle is, "People are not poor because they lack programs and services; people are poor because they lack power." This structural analysis of society locates racism, power, and powerlessness inside the people. Ironically, they rely on a Foucauldian (mis)quote as the impetus for their work: "Knowledge is Power" even though Foucault explicitly rejects this equation, arguing instead that what gets passed on as knowledge is actually a reflection of the manifestation of power; and also that power regimes are reinforced by certain knowledge. This method has been well received by many yet also heavily critiqued as judgmental, divisive, and, based on very flat racial assertions, lacking nuance. Possibly if they understood that knowledge was a site where power operates or becomes manifest, as Foucault intended, they would reconceptualize their approach.

In Greensboro, NC, when I presented my research questions, there were three competing models for tending to the people's possibility landscape. They included (1) the People's Institute's "Undoing Racism" workshops espousing education about the history of power; (2) National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ)'s ANYTOWN program, a multi-racial immersion program for youth; and (3) IMPACT Greensboro, an adult program connecting a multicultural cohort of leaders through dialogue as the foundation for societal change.

2.9 Summary and Transition

The four approaches to race relations and equity presented above are similarly applied in addressing inequity from other socially constructed identity markers. They are each based on some combination of positivist and structuralist framings. The constructionist emphasis on anti-essentialism and discourse argues for a different philosophical stance to issues of identity and therefore methods that respond to issues of inequity founded in identity constructions. What then might be a constructionist response to these issues?

In responding to this inquiry, I briefly describe the basis for choosing qualitative research methods and how the form of inquiry characterized as *bricolage* was appropriate for this work. This section further describes how my particular form of bricolage consisting of narrative inquiry, theory building, and participatory action research was best suited for the context. While not exhaustive, I do give a more detailed theoretical account of the methods that align with this work. I describe the methodology as *alignment* primarily because the description of methods is an effort to retrofit theories to the work but only after the data was developed. With regard to methodology, the aspect that was forward-looking was my intention to incorporate constructionist principles and to introduce narrative practices into the framing of the inquiry and the methods.

In Chapter III I also present my emerging model of *granular communications* that I began to test in this study. The articulation of this model emerged during the conduct and analysis of the research. So while the inquiry was not specifically framed to test the model, I will present the model and determine how, if at all, the data generated from this inquiry affirms this framing. Finally, after determining which methodological traditions most closely align with my approach to the work, I consider the types of questions that data from each of those traditions would be expected to respond to.

CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Method for Developing Methods

The larger question to which this research is an early step is whether and, if so, how relations of power can be shifted at the societal level, such that eventually the perception of race, if it continues to exist as a category of being, will lack any predictive or determinative ability, when considering quality of life. I begin with the observation that relations of power are transmitted and reproduced as performance and aspects of performativity of the various discourses that animate the grand and dominant narratives of the community. The methods developed for this study focus on the languaging and deconstruction of the community's grand or dominant narrative with an eye towards unveiling and supporting the flowering of alternative or preferred narratives.

Albert Einstein is often said to have quipped, "Not everything that can be counted counts. Not everything that counts can be counted." [21] Narrative and discursive shifts are neither quantifiable nor subject to the predict-and-control positivist paradigms that undergird quantitative research. Quantitative methods assume a cause and effect relationship, which I do not assume. Rather, I assume those relationships and the discourses that those relationships are spoken from shape but do not determine the meaning and thereby shape but not determine outcomes. The meaning-making process can be qualified but not quantified. This research effort was conducted in a qualitative research tradition within a social constructionist framework. Lincoln (1992) separated what she termed conventional qualitative methods from constructivist methods and highlighted the constructivist stance of research as being that "realities are constructed entities," The methods of this project were developed in an iterative fashion, which, upon reflection, primarily drew from a combination of focus group method, Freirian emancipatory discourse

[21] The online quote investigator "***suggests*** *crediting William Bruce Cameron instead of Albert Einstein. Cameron's 1963 text 'Informal Sociology: A Casual Introduction to Sociological Thinking' contained the following passage [WCIS]: It would be nice if all of the data which sociologists require could be enumerated, because then we could run them through IBM machines and draw charts as the economists do. However, not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." There are several books that attribute the quote to Cameron and cite this 1963 book (*http://quoteinvestigator.com/2010/05/26/everything-counts-einstein/*).* Either source is sufficient as a support for the approach to this research.

that undergirds participatory action research, narrative inquiry, and theory-building approaches. In other words, I now situate what I intuitively perceived as useful for moving the conversation forward at the time I was conducting the research within what I now understand and interpret as the design of new methods utilizing the conceptual and methodological frameworks of qualitative, narrative, and participatory action approaches that support theory/model building. I then used a Foucauldian framing to unveil the power/knowledge dynamics that shaped the community relations and Judith Butler's conceptualization of performativity as analytical approaches to consider the text produced in the two conversations.

The theories identified align well with the actions, and yet it was the action and intuition, and not the pure theory that guided my initial choices. Lal, Suto, and Ungar (2012) could have been describing my approach to research when they noticed

> Qualitative researchers are increasingly combining methods, principles, and processes from different methodologies in the course of a research study as opposed to operating strictly within a delineated qualitative tradition. Researchers who combine methods might do so at some or all stages of the research process, including data collection, data analysis, and representation of findings. (p. 1)

And they continued by saying

> Critics caution that combined approaches can be problematic when limited attention is given to key considerations of the constituent methodologies. Caelli et al. (2003) observed that studies utilizing combined approaches are at times poorly anchored within an identifiable epistemological or theoretical perspective. They argued that under the pressure of time constraints, researchers turn toward the "less demanding option" of applying a combined approach because it is perceived as a way to avoid having to fully learn about any one established qualitative tradition. (pp. 2-3)

In my case, while the mixing of methods occurred in an iterative, *just-in-time* manner, it was neither time constraints nor methodological sloth that led to lack of pure epistemological and theoretical framing. Rather, my research approach is designed to advantage the complexity that is a hallmark of community engagement. In keeping with my focus on constructionist principles and narrative approaches, it was important to allow the demand of context and the material available in the

context more than the constraints of a prescribed method to determine how to be in conversation with the community of concern.

Within the realm of qualitative research, constructionists often approach investigations with a particular orientation. Gergen and Gergen (2003) note that

> Social constructionist ideas pose a major challenge to the traditional accounts of knowledge and research methods. For the constructionist, what passes as knowledge is generated within communities for purposes shared by the participants … Further, every community shares certain values and these will inevitably be reflected in the results of the inquiry … The constructionist invitation then is first to open the door to multiple traditions, each with their own particular view of knowledge and methodology. Secondly we are challenged to be creative, to initiate new ways of producing knowledge that are tied to our particular values or ideals. (p. 60)

Every method of research also carries with it certain assumptions about the nature of the world. To select a method then is to constrain our way of understanding (Gergen & Gergen, 2003, p. 60). A fluid approach to qualitative research where the researcher allows the context to inform the methods of inquiry and analysis is so often appropriate that it has been given its own categorical framing for both research and analysis — *Bricolage* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

3.2 Bricolage

Denzin and Lincoln describe the qualitative researcher as *bricoleur* and quilt maker. Following the framing and characterization made by several other scholars, they describe the *bricoleur* as

> … one who 'makes do' by adapting the *bricoles* of the world. *Bricolage* is the poetic making-do (de Cearteau, 1984) with 'such *bricoles* – the odds and end, the bits leftover' (Harper, 1987). The bricoleur is a 'jack of all trades, a kind of professional do-it-yourself' (Levi-Strauss, 1966). In their work, *bricoleurs* define and extend themselves (Harper, 1987). Indeed the *bricoleur's* life story or biography 'may be thought of as *bricolage*.' (Harper, 1987) (p. 5)

I recognize my intellectual and professional journey, as described in Chapter I, as weaving together several intellectual and methodological frameworks to simply arrive at the current questions: the *bricoleur's* life. Denzin and Lincoln further

describe the various methodological approaches that a *bricoleur* might adopt including narrative, interpretive, theoretical, political, or methodological. They conclude by offering this:

> The qualitative *bricoleur*, or maker of quilts, uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, and empirical materials are at hand. *If the researcher needs to invent, or piece together, new tools and techniques, he or she will do so*. Choices regarding which interpretive practices to employ are not necessarily made in advance. As Nelson et al. (1992) note, the 'choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context', what is available in the context and what researchers can do in that setting. (p. 5) (*emphasis* added)

This description clearly characterizes my methodological approach in this study. While considering the deployment of other methods that had been available in my tool kit, I recognized that the tools I needed for the job I was trying to do were not available, and so, in good bricolagic fashion, I invented them. This report is about the invention of those tools and a description of the types of works they can be deployed for in the future.

3.2.1 Research context from which tools and methods were derived.

If tools and methods are designed to be responsive to a specific context, it would be helpful for the reader to know the way that I interpreted the context in which I made my methodological choices. I have presented one take on Greensboro, North Carolina's history in Chapter I. I interpreted this context as one in which there was a dominant master narrative that had stubbornly resisted efforts to change over a long period. The narrative was of an inevitable racial hierarchy with Whites assuming the authoritative and responsible positions, those who were non-White and non-Black filling many of the middle rungs of the hierarchy, and Blacks filling the lower ranks with the very real expectation that immigrants would remain invisible, unless they were interpellated into one of the tripartite classifications. The narrative resulted in and was reproduced by tightly-maintained geographic separations and, except on certain college campuses, limited shared social spheres or overlapping public spaces.

The narrative had become compressed (Cobb, 2013). As new residents moved to the Greensboro area, they were recruited to one side or another of the conflict-saturated story. The institutional forces and other modes of power were deployed to achieve greater and more caustic marginalization for those on the underside of the dominant narrative, and there was limited public space for articulation and affirmation of an alternative, except as a measure of protest. Those making the protests could be effectively marginalized so that their continuing protest took on a tinny and hollow air which then reinforced the correctness of the dominant narrative. Although there were numerous civic and social groups in the Greensboro, Guilford County area that were designed to address the division and inequality, the economic and political resources in town tended to privilege one model over all others. Relationship-building was acceptable and fundable, advocacy for structural change or activist protest against political structures was significantly discouraged. Greensboro was in the midst of a struggle to *narrate a contested history*, and many of the institutional forces were aligned to silence dissent as to how that history would be produced.

At several points in Greensboro's history, a variety of coercive methods of change had been attempted, including community and labor organizing, political campaigns and boycotts. Those methods had been met with equally forceful and often violent pursuit of the preservation of the status quo. Greensboro activists had been deeply influenced by the model of The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (http://www.pisab.org/). The People's Institute had an active cell of trainers and facilitators who were among the civic, political, educational and religious leaders of the middle rungs of community hierarchy. As a result, the People's Institute's "Undoing Racism" workshops (http://www.pisab.org/programs#urcow) had been attended by many residents, including many of the participants in the dialogue sessions implemented in this study. The Undoing Racism program presents a structural and institutional power analysis that is undergirded with a totalizing narrative that *all White people are racist*. The model is taught to its participants. Although the participants fill in the local details, the overall structural analysis is given to them by the PISB facilitators. Greensboro was also inundated with programs that were designed to improve relationships across boundaries of race, class, ethnicity and city geography. The presence of the five colleges and universities

infused a constant educational resource into the community and there had been city-wide efforts, like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, focused on healing. And yet the dominant narrative has not shifted.

The dominant narrative of Greensboro was conflict-saturated (Cobb, 2013; Monk & Winslade, 2013; Winslade & Cotter, 1997). I assessed that the methods selected would need to invite the participants' imagination; move quickly towards action; and, yet, make new openings for action and space to allow for new or previously subjugated story lines. The intention of the design of the dialogue sessions was to slow down the observation and decision-making process to allow participants to be involved in what Foucault (1997, p. 7) would describe as "the insurrection of previously subjugated knowledge." In this case, following Freire (1995; 1998) and Geertz (1992), I assert that it was local knowledge.

In the next section, I outline the theoretical undergirding of each of the various *bricoles* that comprised each of the two conversations; after which I describe the bricolagic approach to interpreting the results. Figure III-1 below gives a graphic depiction of the overall engagement process. This description includes the listening sessions and community observations that occurred before the interventions of this study and the community action activity that used the work of this study as its base.

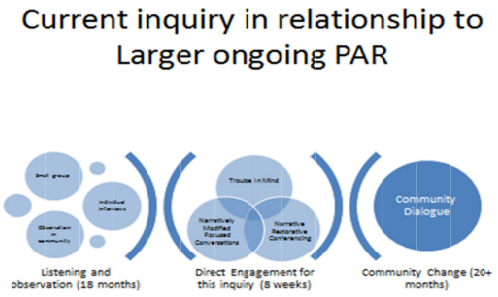


Figure III-1 Overall engagement process

3.3 Methodological Approach

The overall engagement had a bricolagic quality in which the context called forth the approaches and each session had an internal bricolagic quality as well. There were two distinct dialogue sessions. Each session, while contributing to the overall intention of the project, introduced a distinct method that can later be applied

and expanded in similar contexts. While the models were quite complementary of one another, each model can be implemented and serve as the basis for community action with or without the use of the other.

In the first conversation I conducted a narratively-modified focused conversation. This session was conducted using focus group methodology in which I employed a traditional model of Freirian emancipatory dialogue. The conversation itself was facilitated within the flow of a focused conversation heavily informed by the Canadian Institute for Cultural Affairs' focused conversations model. However, the approach was reconceptualized to incorporate narrative inquiry of the type that would be suggested by my emerging model of granular communications. A graphic representation of the structure of narratively modified focused conversations is presented at figure III-2 below. The theoretical underpinning for each component of the process will be presented in the next section.

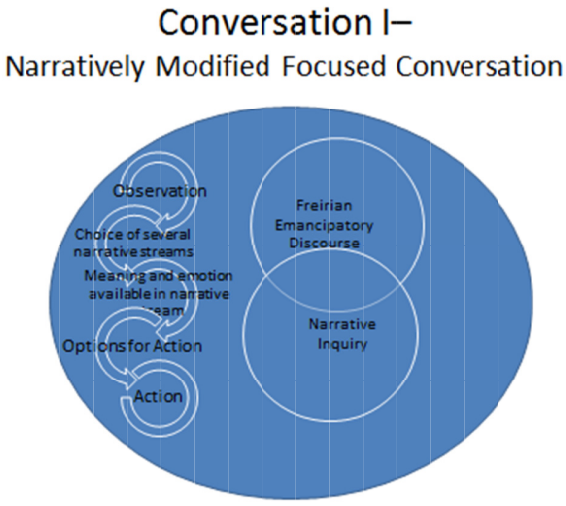


Figure III- 2 - Conversation I - Narratively Modified Focused Conversation

In the second conversation, I used a framework drawn from narrative restorative conferencing to conduct an analysis of the community context based on a Foucauldian framing of power/knowledge. The narrative restorative community conferencing model is consistent with the principles and practices of narrative mediation (Monk & Winslade, 2013) while reflecting some of the principles of collective narrative practice (Denborough, 2010). It is also deeply indebted to the restorative justice framework of Howard Zehr (2002) with considerations for the

limitations of restorative justice that I (Hooker, 2011) and others (Weisberg, 2003) have expressed over time. A graphic representation of the relationship between the components and outcome of the narrative restorative conferencing process is presented in figure III-3 below.

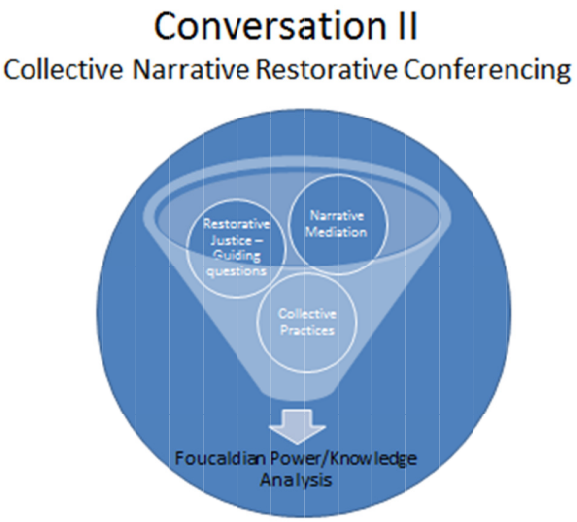


Figure III-3 Conversation II - Collective Narrative Restorative Conference Model

In the next section I offer the theoretical grounding for each component of the two conversations. After which I identify and describe the *bricoles* used for analysis of the methods and the content produced by the methods.

3.3.1 Conversation I

The practice components of the first conversation were focus groups, Freirian emancipatory dialogue, which is the foundation for participatory action research, facilitated in the flow of an I.C.A. Focused Conversation, but narratively modified to reflect the theory of granular communications. The underlying methodology for the work was focus groups. In the figure III-4, below which represents focus groups, the focus group is depicted as the container for the other processes.

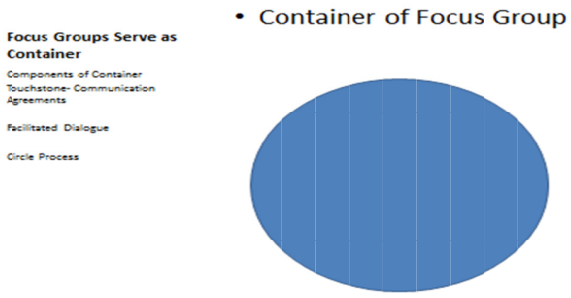


Figure III-4 Focus Group Method as container

3.3.1.1 Focus groups.

"Focus groups are little more than the quasi-formal or formal instances of many of the kinds of everyday speech acts that are part and parcel of unmarked social life – conversations, group discussions, negotiations and the like" (Kamberilis & Dimitriadis, 2008). The basic design of a focus group is to convene and small-to-medium size group together and invite them to *focus* on a specific topic of conversation. Fig III-4 presents the focus group as container. The empty circle could be interpreted as having little meaning. However, it is important to emphasize the foundational quality of focus groups to the overall structure of the processes. The level of structure and the intensity of facilitation can change depending on the intention of the convening. With some groups, once the focus of the conversation has been established, the convener presents relatively open-ended questions and is both content with and intentional about allowing the ideas to emerge from the group applying the minimal amounts of facilitator intervention as possible. At a distant position on the spectrum, the facilitator or convener may have a very specific agenda of what he or she hopes to extract from the group. When this is the case, the facilitations are more actively managed and the questions tend to be more pointed and direct. Often, the approach to focus group facilitation that involves heavy facilitation and pointed as opposed to open questions is also about extracting information (market research) or conveying and testing certain ideas (political research) (Kamberilis & Dimitriadis, 2008).

The sessions in this study were actively facilitated, but with open-ended questions and an explicit intention to spark emergence and novel thinking. The open-ended questions were often repeated as a way of refocusing conversations as other topics would emerge. The approach is a hybrid or middle way as compared to

the two poles described above. This *focused openness* was calculated to allow participants to continue to mine for new possibilities in response to questions as opposed to permitting a natural drift once the first set of often stock answers had been presented. If properly managed, focus groups can

> Offer unique insights into the possibilities of and for critical inquiry as a deliberative, dialogic, and democratic practice that is always already engaged in and with real-world problems and asymmetries in the distribution of economic and social capital. (Kamberilis & Dimitriadis, 2008, p. 375)

In addition to their use in market research and political research, focus groups are ideal sites for problem-posing and *conscientizing*. Paolo Freire defines *conscientization* as "the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action" (p. 379). Action is fundamental because it is the process of changing the reality. Paulo Freire says that "We all acquire social myths which have a dominant tendency, and so learning is a critical process which depends upon uncovering real problems and actual needs" (http://www.freire.org/conscientization/). Freire used focus groups to "enact emancipatory political possibilities of collective work" (Hope and Timmel, 1995, p. 14).

Focus groups have often been used as an important element in advancing an agenda of social justice. By inviting shared story-telling in ways that validate everyday experiences of subjugation and sharing survival strategies (Madriz, 2000), this approach to community engagement as a basis for political change also aligns with Foucault's model of resisting oppression. Foucault argues that in order

> [t]o surmount the situation of oppression people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one that makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity. But the struggle to be more fully human has already begun in the authentic struggle to transform the situation. (Foucault, 1984)

If the problem analysis is framed inside the same constructs that create the problem and if the conversations are framed within the same discursive positions and relations of power that are the cause of the inequalities, people, like many in Greensboro, will see themselves as facing unchangeable circumstances or insurmountable possibilities. "Freire often referred to these situations as *limit*

situations, that is, situations that people cannot see themselves beyond. Limit situations naturalize peoples' sense of oppression, giving it a kind of obviousness and immutability" (Kamberilis & Dimitriadis, 2008, p. 378). The mode of popular education in which focus groups were used as a central method was a primary practice in response to these circumstances.

Freire's theory and praxis had deep influence in popular education and was the basis for emancipatory theatre as developed by Boal (1985) and others (Cohen, Varea, & Walker, 2011; Gergen & Gergen, 2012; McCarthy, 2004). His work extended also to the U.S. context and profoundly influenced the participatory action research (PAR) movement led by Orlando Fals Borda (2013) and others (Kamberilis & Dimitriadis, 2008, p. 380). The use of focus groups as the convening methods applied in this study was critical for both pedagogy and action planning. The focus group was the foundational practice of Freirian emancipatory dialogue and as the basis for most participatory action research. These dialogic methods implemented within the focus group container served as a bridge to and foundation for the later participatory action

3.3.1.2 Participatory action research.

The focus group with its central focus on an analysis of the problematic of the play is a typical Freirian process and also a standard mode of initiating a participatory engagement process (Hope & Timmel, 1995). Baum et al. (2006) state that participatory action research (PAR)

> … seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it; at its heart [PAR] is collective, self-reflective inquiry that researchers and participants undertake, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves. The reflective process is directly linked to action, influenced by understanding of history, culture, and local context and embedded in social relationships. The process of PAR should be empowering and lead to people having increased control over their lives. (p. 854)

Participatory action supports *radical* change. Understood using the original meaning of the term *radical* – which is to proceed from the root[22] -- participatory actions should engage at the most fundamental levels of human experience. The organizing principles of human experience can be discovered in the discourses that

[22] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/radical

shape it. "Discourse itself is a form of social action – a 'doing with' in the world," argue Gergen and Gergen (2003). For researchers with an inclination to accomplish radical transformations, participatory action research (PAR) is a model of constructionist engagement that aligns fully well with this impulse (Gergen & Gergen, 2003).

Participatory action research is also a model of community engagement by which researchers can position themselves as insider observers in support of authentic involvement. Fals Borda, one of the early leaders in development of the PAR approach, described the intentions of participatory action as both engaging the community in authentic participation and reshaping inquiry models so that researchers do not inadvertently reproduce the conditions that people seek to undo (Borda, 2013). Of *authentic participation*, Borda says

> One aims at shortening the distance between superior and subaltern, between oppressors and oppressed, exploiter and exploited. Furthermore, different types of knowledge are combined or enter into dialogue, for instance, academic erudition and popular knowledge. This, in turn, made it possible to elaborate new tools for research and teaching, such as the intergenerational dialogue, surveys in groups or symposia, cultural maps, the use of archives from memory or family, imputation and triangulation. Thus we recover the popular (unofficial) version of history and strengthen the culture and self-esteem of people at the grassroots. (p. 160)

In the current research context, a variety of models of learning and analysis were present in the participants and were placed in dialogue through the selection method and the method of conversation facilitation.

Discourse cannot shift in one conversation. It requires repetitive and multifaceted exchanges. Participatory action then has to be authentic and organic, such that the people of the community can live into the new and changing story over extended periods without relying on the presence of a researcher. The authentic and organic nature of the approach is reinforced by allowing community members to name and conceptualize their own problems and then co-enact searches for solutions (Freire, 1995) or dissolution.

A typical practice that Freire utilized to approach authenticity was to employ a generative word, picture, or skit as a problem-posing material that the community collective could wrestle with (Hope and Timmel, 1995). These generative words and

images and the themes for any skit would be developed based on the listening done in the community. This listening was both in natural settings and convened conversations.

The overall community engagement experience followed the Freirian approach as described by Hope and Timmel (1995). The eighteen months of individual and group interviews and listening in natural settings identified generative themes for Greensboro. The generative themes were well represented in the play *Trouble in Mind*. The use of the play as the discussion point acts in the same way as the generative skit and was presented as a *code* where community members are asked to analyze and solve the problem of the skit by bringing their own life stories and experiences (pp. 57-66). This play is particularly well-suited for problem-posing because, although the playwright, Alice Childress, wrote two alternatives for a third act, she never allowed the third act to be produced. This caused the play to end after Act Two without resolution of several of the conflicts contained in the story line. While the scope of this research project does not include the subsequent community change activities, the philosophy of engagement for this project is informed by the principles of participatory action.

One disadvantage of many participatory action approaches is that they do not create enough space and time or have as an intention within the process the opportunity for participants to understand the interpretive basis for the actions they propose to take. Human beings, as expert meaning-makers, complete the process from observation to decision or action with such frequency, rapidity, and efficiency that it is difficult to be conscious of each of the steps involved each time the process occurs, unless specifically invited to pay attention to the process. Often, dialogue processes are focused at the level of interpretation and decision without sufficient attention to the methods of arriving at meanings. And yet the meanings that are available and those that are not occur within various discourses and shape the possibility landscape. Often, particularly repressive and marginalizing discourses will not include within them any actions that seek to undermine their power.

One facilitation process that has been designed to slow down the decision-making and to bring conscious awareness to each step in the process is the *focused conversations* process developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA) (see: http://www.ica-usa.org/). After describing the model, I will present the insights I

drew from the model and the underlying assumptions that would need to be reconsidered to incorporate a constructionist and narrative framework, which is not the original model's foundation. I will then present a brief description of my emerging model of granular communications. The full description of that model is beyond the scope of this project but will need to be fully elaborated to give full flower to these processes.

3.3.1.3 Focused conversation.

The focused conversation methodology was developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA) as one component of its overall Technology of Participation (ToP) program (see: http://www.ica-usa.org/ToP). The focused conversation process is a four-stage conversational model designed to interrupt the unconscious observation-feeling-interpretation-decision making process in ways that allow participants to access every phase of their own decision and meaning-making process as well as the processes of others in ways that support deeper and more transparent exchange (The Canadian Institute for Cultural Affairs, 2000). In theory, this supports more meaningful engagement. The four stages of the ICA Focused Conversation model are captured in the acronym ORID

Objective – What is the data? What observations are made—sights, sounds, smells, feel – without evaluation or meaning ascribed.

Reflective -- What feelings are attached to the observed data?

Interpretive- What personal meaning does each participant make of the data + feeling combination that they experience?

Decisional – What actions are chosen or decisions are made based on the meaning that is made?

The facilitator of an ORID process intentionally divides the conversation into four stages to allow participants to notice for themselves the different stages of their thinking and decision-making process. The facilitative model also has space for dyads, triads, and large group sharing to allow others to notice how observations are processed and decisions are derived. Simply taking the time to notice the meaning that is being made creates an opening to consider other meanings that might be

made, and this allows participants to consider how their perspective or culture or reflex is managing the way they respond.

The ORID conversational flow is designed to reflect what ICA calls, "the natural internal process of perception, response, judgment, and decision" (The Canadian Institute for Cultural Affairs, 2000, p. 22). This method also reflects a set of "life presuppositions" that inform the ICA's work. In describing the foundations for focused conversations, the ICA states

> It is important to grasp the presuppositions behind this method. First, the method assumes that we find the reality of life in the palpable, observable, sensory world. We discover an empirical experience, not ivory-tower abstraction or even virtual reality …
>
> Second, it assumes that authentic feelings and emotions derive from this empirical experience — whatever we encounter. This internal data from feelings, emotions and associations is just as real as the externally observable data, and must be considered seriously in making decisions …
>
> The third presupposition is that meaning is not something to be found in some mountain top experience or esoteric literature; rather, meaning is something that is created out of the mundane encounters in the midst of life. Meaning is something that we all have to work at constantly, through processing the actual life we have on our hands …
>
> Fourth, relative to the decision stage, the method assumes that processing insights about life involves projecting that insight out into the future. If we do not decide future implications for action, our reflection is stuck on viewing internal responses, which never connect back to the world. They become another form of navel-gazing. (The Canadian Institute for Cultural Affairs, 2000, p. 24)

3.3.2 Insights taken from ORID.

There are valuable principles to be drawn from the Focused Conversation model for achieving narrative decompression and building an action plan that would support a social justice action agenda. I find slowing down the process between observation and decision-making especially compelling. However, the assumptions and presuppositions of the model (stated above) are based in a positivist stance with a nod towards constructivism. The model does not sufficiently attend to discourse, narrative, co-active meaning making, or performativity to be able to apply the

process unchanged for a context like Greensboro. In the next section I briefly describe the *granular communications model* that I am advancing. Then, based on the granular communications model and the other constructionist stances previously stated, I present the modifications I introduced to the focused conversation process.

3.3.3 Constructionist reframing of ICA presuppositions.

A constructionist perspective would propose a different relationship between observation, emotion, meaning making, and action (Gergen K. J., 2009b). When observations are made, the observations and their description would not be, from a constructionist perspective, a representation of a reality. The description reflects presents the observer's meaning-making process, which reflects their primary and secondary socialization at the nexus of the intersection of and positioning within the multiple discourses that are framing that particular context. Also emotions convey a different understanding and therefore different information from a constructionist perspective. Berger and Luckmann (1966) propose that emotions are simply part of the process of aligning with those responsible for the person's primary socialization. Vivien Burr (2003) also contends that the emotions are the result of socialization. She outlines a process by which this occurs.

> In English speaking cultures, the words 'anger', 'hatred,' and envy and the concepts to which they refer pre-date any one person's entry into the world as an infant, and in the process of learning to talk we have no choice but to come to understand ourselves in terms of these concepts … The way that language is structured therefore determines the ways that experience and consciousness are structured. (p. 48)

To emphasize the discursive aspects of being socialized into an emotional framework, Gergen and Gergen (2003) discuss the impacts of a fact compared with emotion duality and assert

> The concept of power has [an] ideological function; that is, it exists in a system of power relations and plays a role in maintaining [that system] … In identifying emotion primarily with irrationality, subjectivity, the chaotic, and other negative characteristics, and in subsequently labeling women the emotional gender, cultural belief reinforces the ideological subordination of women. The more general ideological role that the concept has played consists in reinforcing the split between 'facts' and 'values,' as cognition, which can theoretically achieve knowledge of facts,

> is dichotomized in relation to emotion, which is 'only' an index of value and personal interest. (pp. 39- 43)

Gergen and Gergen, Burr, and others present emotions as formed in and expressive of relations of power. This suggests that while emotions may be very communicative as presupposed in the ICA model, what is communicated is not simply a universally understood meaning contained in emotion describing words and emotion performing gestures. Rather, emotion expressions are reflective of socialization, discourse, and relations of power.

In contrast with the ICA's third presupposition, from a constructionist perspective, meaning is not something that an individual makes in relationship to some reality; rather, meaning is made and transformed and remade and reconsidered in the variety of relationships and relational contexts (Burr, 2003; Gergen K. J., 2009b). Many constructionists might assert that meaning of any given observation is made inside a history of relations of power, many of which pre-existed the current observer (Winslade & Monk, 2008). The meaning becomes culturally prescribed and transmitted, and meaning is carried in narrative form from one context to the next. For these and a variety of other reasons, while it was useful to draw on the ICA insight of slowing down conversations, it was even more important to develop a model reflecting the understanding that meaning is made in and through social interactions and carried in narrative form. This became the foundation for the narratively-modified focused conversations approach. Drawing from the insights for methodological purposes is appropriate. Also, recognizing the differences in philosophical stances, it is also appropriate to reconceptualize the model in ways that infuse constructionist principles. This is what I did.

3.4 Granular Communications a Narrative Model for Analysis and Inquiry

Granular communications is a model that I am advancing that describes the processes through which communication occurs. Communication is a concept which, following Deleuze, is actually comprised of a multiplicity of concepts (Winslade, 2009, pp. 342-343). Granular communications pierce the singular concept of communication to unveil and advantage the multiplicity of concepts contained within. It is in the use of the multiplicity of concepts that the inquirer can get to the finest granule of the communication act. It is also by plowing up the ground

hardened in the larger concept that a seed (grain) can be planted that might shift the positioning ever so slightly. This change in trajectory, again following Deleuze, even if ever so slight presents an opening for radical transformation over time. That is the intention and work of granular communication.

The model is offered as a tool for explanation and analysis and as a guide for inquiry in narrative research, mediation, and counseling contexts; and it may also have promising application in other arenas such as trial law, homiletics, and so forth that rely on and benefit from effective communications. It borrows an outline and framing from the insights of the Institute for Cultural Affairs' (ICA) focused conversation model. The structure of an ICA-styled focused conversation works to slow down and separate the stages of the meaning-making process to allow others insight into a person's approach. Similarly, granular communication also proposes a process by which the complex layers of meaning-making processes can be revealed for the person and others.

It is conceptualized as *granular* in reference to two different metaphoric formulations. First, the communication model is granular in the sense that it breaks communications down to a very small component. Like atomic structure and Deleuze's *concept*, there always seems to be smaller particles to be discovered and the smaller particle offers some refinement in understanding of the operation of the larger one. For now, the level at which this model breaks down communications has very specific applications in practice. The second sense of *granular* is intended to convey multiple implications. This granular reference is referring to the quality of grain or being a seed. The seed contains within it all of the material for the entire tree and so understanding the communication seed is vital to understanding the type of communications that will occur. Built into the seed are also the discursive forces that are creating and shaping the person's identity. Understanding the content of this seed should also inform the broader discourses shaping the family, social, and lived experience of community and other levels of societal organization. *Granular* also refers to a seed in the sense that at this level the deconstruction of a communication experience plants the seeds – the possibility, the raw material, the opportunity - for shifting discursive positions and ultimately discourse. Granular communication methods seeks to uncover at the most minute level the forms of subjectivation and

submission that are enacted, performed, and reproduced in the most banal and smallest instances of communication.

Communication is power in the Foucauldian sense that communication is an action that indirectly impacts the actual and perceived range of present and future action options of another person. If communication is understood as a potential exercise of power, then it would be valuable to conduct an analysis within communication performances that allows communicators to notice the discourses, narratives, and relations of power at work in their communication efforts and in the relationships formed around those efforts.

The next section describes several component parts of granular communications. After describing many of the component parts, I describe the process of communication that is central to granular communications model. Finally I offer a few practical ways to work with the model and several implications for the current study and future considerations.

3.4.1 Communication as co-action.

I begin with the end in mind: communication is a co-active process. Meaning is only made, confirmed, and affirmed in relationship. Effective communication occurs when the concept, idea, intention, meaning that a sender was intending to communicate is received, made meaning of, and the receiver then performs a response that indicates an awareness of an intended meaning and the intended meaning that the sender communicated closely aligns with the meaning that the sender sought to make. For our purposes, effective communication does not require an acceptance, belief, agreement, compliance or any form of alignment or consensus with the sender's ideas. Rather communication is *effective* if a meaning receives a response that indicates that the receiver is aware of the communicative intention of the sender.

Even in this most simplified form, effective communication is a miracle! There are so many factors that work against effective communication, including a) both senders and receivers' choice of performative manifestation of intention; b) *noise* that impacts the observation as well as noise that impacts the receiving of the response to that observation; c) context of interpretation; and d) distance of exchange. An intention to communicate may be formed as the result of conscious or unconscious internal dialogue. Even an internal dialogue is a performance of

communication with external audiences. No utterance is made spontaneously that does not have an utterance that precedes it. The first audible words in a conversation most often are uttered in response to earlier direct communications or as a continuation of or in response to communications that occurred in other contexts. Communication is also co-active in the sense that meaning can only be made in a relationship. That is because the meaning-making process is the result of coordinated action; every attempted communication requires a response in order for meaning to be made (Bruffee, 1986).

Communication occurs in co-action and it is an iterative co-action process. The following description as depicted in figure III- 5 is a proposed flow of that process.

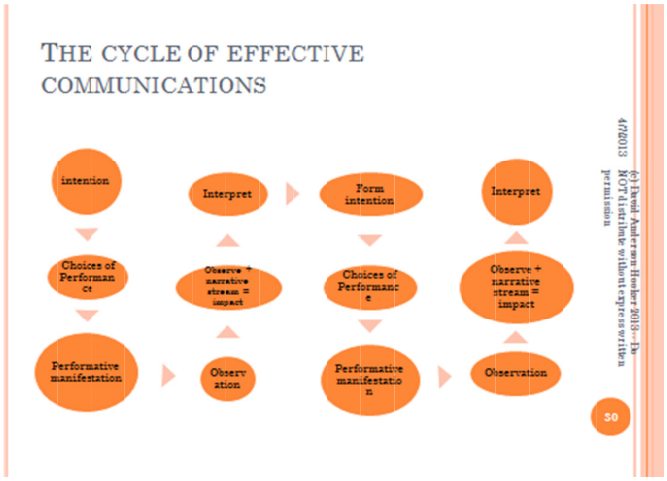


Figure III - 5 Granular Communications Cycle of Effective Communication

3.4.2 Stages of granular communication process.

These are the suggested stages of concern in the granular communication model:

1. Formulation of an intended communication
2. Consideration of choices of performance of intention
3. Performance of intention
4. Observation
5. Observation placed in one or more narrative streams
6. Use of context and audience to select from among the narrative streams
7. Observation plus narrative stream yields meaning
8. Meaning yields impact
9. Formation of intention to respond

10. Consideration of choices of performance of intention
11. Performance of intention
12. Observation
13. Observation placed in one or more narrative streams
14. Use context and audience to select from among the narrative streams
15. Observation plus narrative stream yields meaning
16. Relate yielded meaning (15) with intended communication (1) the more closely these align the more effective was the communication.

As the reader will recognize, the co-action aspect of the communication process is reflected in the ways that steps 9-15 repeat steps 1-8 but from the perspective of the original observer as the new sender.

In the next section I briefly describe what happens at each stage and how narrative and discourse are infused in the granular process. Because steps 9-15 are simply repeated steps reoriented to and from a new sender who is the former observer, I will only describe the action one time. It is possible though that misalignment in an original communication occurs such that the cycle continues to spend for extended periods without ever achieving effective communication. This type of situation has been the basis for comic and tragic theatre since its earliest days. It is also important to acknowledge that this model is being presented in a simplified form that isolates each communication phase. Communication is likely happening in a much more complex form in which the communicative actions, and intentions are moving in multiple directions at the same time. There are multiple relationships that are often simultaneously involved in each communicative exchange. The model is simplified to allow clarification of each phase.

As previously stated, initial utterances are not generated in a vacuum and *ex nihilo*. Rather, each utterance and communicative act is in response to a previous communicative act, even if not with the current recipient of the communication. An utterance could be in response to a lesson learned in some other setting or in response to a story about a distant past just as it could be about a direct previous or current exchange. The description of steps is presented as though communication occurs in pristine and non-contextual formats. That is a fiction created for the purposes of putting forth the model.

3.4.2.1 Formulation of an intended communication.

The idea that meaning is formed in the mind of an individual who then seeks to express that idea is a notion from a positivist/structuralist framing; whereas in granular communication, which operates in a constructionist/narrative framing, all ideas are themselves produced in relationship (Gergen & Gergen, 2003). In addition to all previous relational encounters and continuing conversations that a person's utterances are part of, before the idea or intention to communicate an idea arises, discourse is already at work.

Vivien Burr (2003), expanding on the explanation of the Foucauldian conceptualization of discourse states

> A discourse [as used by Foucault] refers to the set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events … If we accept the view … that a multitude of alternative versions of events are available through language, that means that, surrounding any one object, event, person, etc. there may be a variety of different discourses, each with a different story to tell about the object in question, a different way of representing the world. (p. 64)

Foucault (1984), following Nietzsche, raises the important question of investigating a text by asking, "Who is speaking?" The point of this question is to emphasize the reflexive nature of discourse. An inquirer would seek to identify, to the extent possible, the historical position or the particular interest or concerns that allow the *speaker* to claim (or seek) the authority to be listened to (Gutting, 2005, p. 12).

Butler (1997a) goes further to say that it is not the utterer of the words that is speaking but rather they are being *spoken* by particular discourse and forms of power. As Burr (2003) notes, "[S]ocial constructionism is not claiming that language and discourse merely have a strong influence upon our perception of reality. What we know as reality is itself a social construction" (p. 80). All this raises the question of whether construction of *intention* is a viable concept in this formulation. Whether the person has agentic contribution to the formation of an intended communication is not something to seek to resolve in this abbreviated presentation of the model. In either instance, because communication is a co-action, there has to be a performance

of some sort to indicate the intention. In every circumstance and with each intention, there are multiple performance options that must be considered and selected from among.

3.4.2.2 Considering choices of performative options for intended communication.

When a person formulates an intention to communicate – or as the intention emerges in relationship or is spoken by the discourse – they consciously or unconsciously make a choice from among several performative manifestations of the intended communication. For instance, a person may wish to create a shared understanding that they are *angry*. The performance of anger can occur in a wide array of styles. For instance, anger can be formed by talking loud, talking softly, or being silent; staring at the Other or looking away; talking fast or talking slow; throwing things, clinching a fist, grabbing tight or letting go; frowning, smiling, or having a non-expressive gaze; holding one's breath or sighing deeply; or any number of other options. The performance could also be language with or without correlative embodied performances. The choice among all the options is guided by knowledge of receiver, audience – present and virtual, and the context in which communication is to be attempted. Once a performance option is selected, then the action is performed.

3.4.2.3 Performance choices.

An example of parents who wishes to create a shared understanding of their *anger* might choose to yell at their child or, talk soft, or be silent. In many instances, the choice of performance might be different if they were at home than if at the synagogue, and even that choice might be very different than if in a grocery store or on the sidelines at a soccer match or at a school conference. Often the performance choice is made within an understanding of the audience. Many of the audiences might have overlapping participants, however the context would also deeply influence the performative choices. If I am angry with my child at school for my child's performance and that performance affects my child's academic future, I am likely to express anger differently than if I were angry with that same child in the same school setting and the child's performance impacted another child AND that child's parents were present.

With regard to performance options and following Butler's conceptualization of *performativity* in which repetitive performances take on a condensed meaning,

there are ways in which a particular performance can become a performative manifestation of an intended communication, which is why my mother could give me *the look* in any context and it conveyed that same meaning as all the other past performances of anger. All of this is informed by the child's and parent's age, mental and social maturity, and the level of available resources. These practices are also deeply embedded in notions of culture and tradition.

Butler's conceptualization of performativity also explains why and how aesthetics and discourse can take on communicative import. If the discourse is of *angry Black men*, then the very presence of a Black man communicates anger. In order to dispel or refute the communication of anger, I am forced to smile when I get in an elevator with older White people. This is an acceptance and acknowledgement of a position call and an action that reproduces and affirms the discourse. It is also recognition of the multiple lines of power that Deleuze identifies because if a Black man smiles in an elevator with youngish White women it could be understood inside of a different discourse – *Black man as sexual predator and threat to White womanhood*. And so the older White woman who remembers the stories from her racially-segregated youth might interpret the smile inside of the *Black man sexually predatory* discourse when it was intended as an acquiescence and refutation of the *angry Black man* discourse. Effective communication ***is*** a miracle! But I digress.

3.4.2.4 Observation.

The next phase in the process is the first to include an *other*. For the first time communication becomes possible. Communication is meaning making that requires co-action. In the observation phase, the actual receiver of the intended communication may or may not be the intended receiver. Each observer of the performance will have their own independently co-active process that supports their own meaning making. Figure III – 6a demonstrates the process of observation and the possibility for miscommunications.

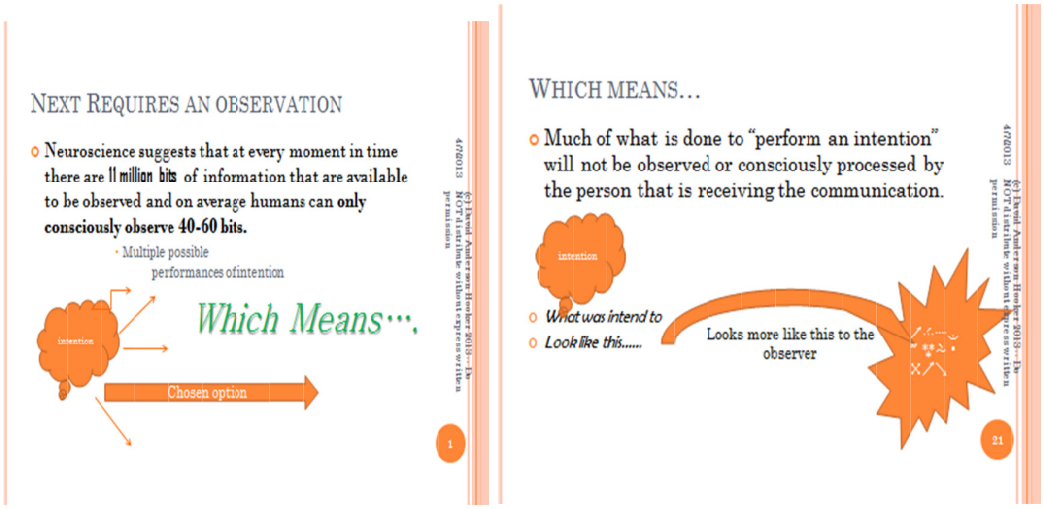


Figure III – 6a -- Performance and Observation in Communication Process

Many factors impact the observation: noise, observer's heuristics, audience, context, and distance. I consider each briefly below:

3.4.2.4i Noise

Modern neuroscience suggests that at any given moment and at every moment there are upwards of 11 million bits of information to which attention could be paid. That same research cluster suggests that of the 11 million available, most people can only pay conscious attention to 60-75 bits. This might make sense if you think of all the places where you have information available to you. Your lungs are providing information at all times as are your fingertips and toes, each plot of skin on your body, and your ears, eyes, tongue, teeth and taste buds. If you are not a smoker and you are sitting within wafting distance of a cigarette smoker, the first time a hint of the smell passes by, depending on your level of sensitivity and the meaning that you make of cigarette smoke, it may or may not be noticeable. If the smoke becomes more fully present in your space then its presence becomes at least one or more of your sixty information bits. Smoke in nose takes a few bits to distinguish to make sure that it is cigarette smoke and not a burning piece of toast or a burning building. Attention to this will not allow you to concentrate on something else and will crowd out some other available 60-75 bits of information. Other factors that create observational noise may be lighting, background and ambient sounds, multiple communications happening simultaneously (i.e., crowded room). The receivers' personal health and comfort and other items they might be thinking about will also

impact their ability to fully observe all aspects of the performance that the sender made of the sender's intention.

There is also 'noise' generated by prejudice, admiration, and other personally mediated and culturally prescribed ways of listening. I will speak more about these in presenting the concept of *distance* in communications. Noise can also come in the form of relationship history. If the sender and receiver have a direct relationship there may be multiple conversation and communication threads being referenced in any particular encounter, placing the performance on an unintended thread, would affect the capacity to make a full observation. Another factor that significantly effects observations is the receiver's observational strategy and schema.

3.4.2.4ii Observer heuristics

Being human is making meaning. Because there is so much data and so many sources from which information can be obtained to contribute to the meaning-making process, most people develop information gathering and processing schema. That schema is best represented by the rungs of Chris Argyris' ladder of inference.

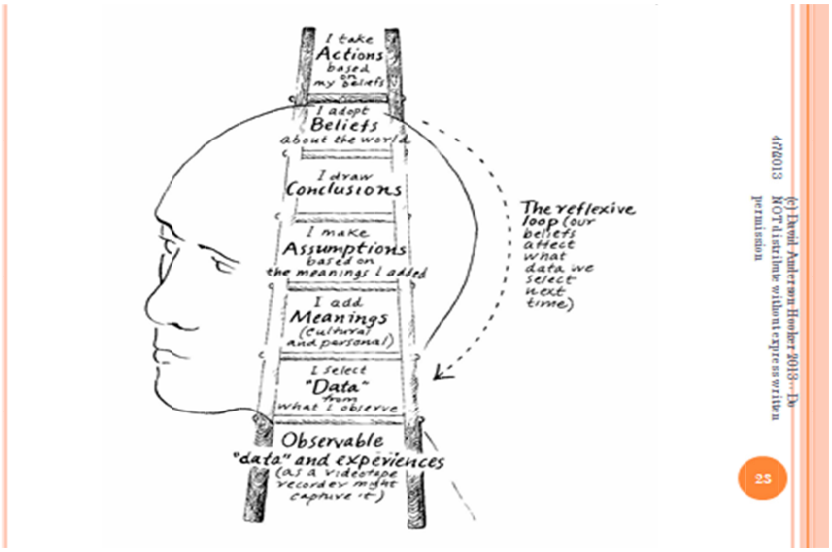


Figure III- 7 Argyris' Ladder of Inference

The ladder indicates that there is observable data and experiences and from among all the available data, the person selects which data to attend to. The observer adds meanings to that data, makes assumptions based on the meaning the person has added, draws conclusions about the data, and those conclusions support beliefs

and assumptions that they then generalize to construct their larger world view. Finally, the person takes action based on the world viewing in light of the data they have observed. The ladder is always presented with the presence of a feedback loop that suggests a circular aspect, which suggests that based on the assumptions and beliefs I have, I then choose which data to pay attention to. The sources of information, knowledge and to a great extent *truth* are framed inside of my assumptions and beliefs about the world.

With regard to granular communications, there are three very significant aspects of this part of the meaning-making process. First, most of each person's beliefs, assumptions and worldviewing was originally given to him or her by socializing institutions during the early periods of a person's formation. These are not fixed determinative and immutable, but they will always be reference points from which the person's meaning-making processes can be based or shifted. The second important feature is the work of discourse, which has been described above in this Chapter.

3.4.2.4iii Context

That communications are relational and co-active indicates that both context and culture in which communication is attempted are significant. Further, because every individual exists as a multi-being, understanding the multi-being-*ness* helps to unveil the dynamics in which co-action is occurring. In understanding both context and culture, MacIntyre (2006) says, "Consider what it is to share a culture. It is to share schemata which are at one and the same constitutive of and normative for intelligible action by myself and are also a means for making meaning of the actions of others" (pp. 4-5). MacIntyre's conceptualization of culture as a globalized heuristic recognizes the relational contexts in which ideas arise, the ways that performative possibilities are both identified and selected upon, and how they are received and interpreted. While it does not seem to be inconsistent with MacIntyre's conceptualization, it is not apparent that he acknowledges or accounts for the multi-beingness of individuals. Granular communications requires that multi-being be accounted for in understanding context.

3.4.2.4iv *Multi-being*

Persons are situated and differently positioned in multiple discourses at the same time all the time (Gergen K. J., 2009). People are not just participants in

relationships. We are also the products of them. Following, Butler's conceptualization of performativity and Althusser's doctrine of interpellation, our subjectivity is named inside of the relationship. When I come into being as a father, there are multiple discourses related to fatherhood, and these discourses inform the range of emotions to perform, meanings to make, and actions to take inside of that space of relatedness. At the same time, I exist in the discourse of fatherhood, I might also exist and be positioned by my relationships as uncle, brother, husband, friend, boss, dance partner, church member, etc. Each of these discourses intersects and is variously interpreted by the discourses on age, gender, race, profession, residency, access to finances, and any number of others.

At every given moment, I continue to exist in each of these relationships with varying and fluid positionality. Depending on the context of the communication, varying relationships and the correlative discourses become of heightened momentary significance. The discourses of importance at each given moment are likely influenced by the many relationships the person is in and which become primary in the moment is shaped by the nature of conversations to which a person is responding. The conversations are not just in the moment but are shaped by context and the multiple audiences that are physically present or implied at any given moment.

At every moment, when a communication process is occurring, these relationships form audiences – some actual, some virtual. In understanding the choices of performance and also meaning making, granular communication allows the communicators to make visible the audiences both present and implicit to whom their performance is directed.

These are the dimensions that affect what is actually observed: noise, observer's heuristics, audience, and context. Once an observation is made it has to be placed in one or more narrative streams. The quality, clarity, and depth of the stream are determined by the distance of the communicative exchange.

3.4.2.4v *Place narrative inside of one or more narrative streams*

> *I can only answer the question, what am I to do? If I can answer the prior question "of what story or stories do I find myself a part?* Alasdair MacIntyre (1981)

People live into and out of their stories. As we make observations and understand our options for action, we must first understand our context and then know what story or stories we are part of. Although it is far beyond the scope of this brief introduction to fully describe this effect, stories are the way that meaning is carried from one moment to the next. Stories have characters, story lines, plots and genres. Storylines have challenges, choices, and outcomes. These dimensions of a story also create the range of intelligible action, emotion, meaning making, and so on. Ochs and Capps (1996) state

> The inseparability of narrative and self is grounded in the phenomenological assumption that entities are given meaning through being experienced and the notion that narrative is an essential resource in the struggle to bring experiences to conscious awareness. At any point in time, our sense of entities, including ourselves, is an outcome of our subjective involvement in the world. Narrative mediates this involvement. Personal narratives shape how we attend to and feel about events. They are partial representations and evocations of the world as we know it. (p. 21)

When a person operates inside multiple narrative streams, that person has all the dimensions of emotion, meaning, and action available from the combination of those multiple story lines. Once the choice of story has been narrowed – i.e., the observation has been placed in a particular or limited number of narrative streams – then the ranges of options for action and emotion are also limited. Consider for example the instance in which I return home to my house after a few drinks with my significant other. When I turn on the lights in my house, there are many people there. I immediately place this observation in multiple narrative streams – I walked in on an unauthorized party being hosted by my teenage daughter; I have walked in on a party that I authorized and forgot about; I have walked into the wrong house; I am being robbed; it's my birthday, and this is a surprise party. Until I choose a narrative stream, I have a wide range of emotions and actions available to me. But as soon as I have chosen a narrative stream then the range of emotions and action options narrows.

In communities with longstanding dominant and highly compressed narratives, the range of available story lines becomes sharply constrained, the result being that people in the community do not challenge or expand each other's

interpretations or narrations. This creates a context where the limited range of options for action seems natural, fixed, and immutable.

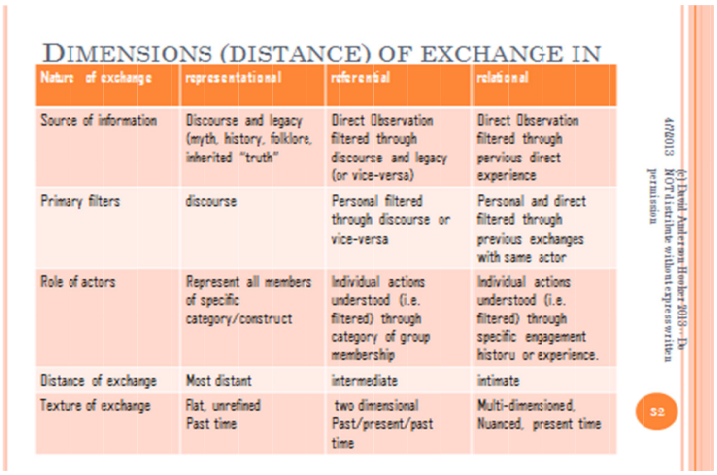
In determining the narrative streams to place an observation in, there is a judgment about the context of the exchange which is described by the concept of *distance*. Distance relates to the locus of meaning making. The closer in time and space the meaning making occurs in relationship to the actual communicative activity is more relational. The further away with a reliance on categories and archetypes, is said to be representational.

3.4.2.4vi Distance

Distance is the characteristic of communications that gives the greatest indication of the extent to which the person is speaking or the person is *being spoken* by culture or discourse. Distance also refers to the extent to which the context of the immediate audience is developed inside of narrative streams of the observer and sender's personal histories or whether the audience is being interpreted in terms of archetype, or stereotype. Although distance is fluid and malleable and occurs on a continuum for the purposes of the presentation of model I have staked out three points along the continuum. I refer to these three points as *relational*, *referential,* and *representational.*

If a communication is happening in the *relational* dimension, a wide array of the narrative streams from which the person chooses to make meaning of the observation is streams that involve direct interpersonal relatedness. This type of relatedness allows a person to experience another not as an either/or binary but as a textured, nuanced, multidimensional, and multifaceted entity. In a relational exchange the communicators are probably aware and maybe even connected to several dimensions of the Other as a multi-relational being. For instance, I am very aware of my brother in several of his roles as a father, husband, son, brother, uncle, mentor, boss, musician, public figure, church leader, and so on. He and I have had several decades of multifaceted experiences together, which allows me to observe his effort at a communication from multiple different perspectives. This also gives me a broad range for actions, meaning-making, emotional performance, and so forth in regard to my relationship and communication with him. We even have different vocabularies – communicative performances – that we can adopt in different circumstances. We have what could be characterized as a nuanced and highly-

textured relationship. Our relationship has depth and multiple dimensions. Because I have experienced him and participated as he balances various roles and values, I have broad interpretive capacity in our communication exchanges. People who only know him in one of those several roles or who relate to him primarily in only one of those capacities would have a less textured relationship. They may only know him at the middle distance — *referential* or understand him only from the furthest distance as *representing* public and elected officials. In a *relational* exchange, even though there is certainly discourse that has informed our relationship, there are also many opportunities to reconceptualize or reposition each other in those discourses because we have a sufficient number of exchanges to allow us to directly calibrate our relationship in terms of our personal experience. Figure III- 8 outlines some of the dimensions of communication distance.



DIMENSIONS (DISTANCE) OF EXCHANGE IN

Nature of exchange	representational	referential	relational
Source of information	Discourse and legacy (myth, history, folklore, inherited "truth"	Direct Observation filtered through discourse and legacy (or vice-versa)	Direct Observation filtered through pervious direct experience
Primary filters	discourse	Personal filtered through discourse or vice-versa	Personal and direct filtered through previous exchanges with same actor
Role of actors	Represent all members of specific category/construct	Individual actions understood (i.e. filtered) through category of group membership	Individual actions understood (i.e. filtered) through specific engagement historu or experience.
Distance of exchange	Most distant	intermediate	intimate
Texture of exchange	Flat, unrefined Past time	two dimensional Past/present/past time	Multi-dimensioned, Nuanced, present time

Figure III - 8 Dimensions of exchange in granular communications

A referential relationship allows the observer to have direct experience of the other person, and yet all the direct and personal interactions are filtered through the categorical lens of reference: Doug is my *Boss*; or that is my *father*. In a referential relationship, the actions of the other are calibrated based on the filtering category. The discursive positions offered through those various categories also become the starting point and establish expectations. But in referential exchanges, even while the filter is operative, the personal exchanges are also being observed and considered during the meaning-making process. The referential exchange level is a midway distance level in the sense that there are some opportunities for texturing and nuancing. If a relational exchange is a three- or four-dimensional exchange, a referential exchange is two-dimensional. In this instance, discourse is more

influential in the meaning-making process than in a relational exchange, but it is not determinative, unlike the third category – *representational* – which represents the furthest point of distance in which an exchange can take place.

A representational exchange is one in which the co-communicator embodies a particular category or being and all exchanges are based on knowledge of that category as opposed to any direct experience of differentiation of the actual audience. *Old people* are like this, *millennials* don't believe in that. She's a *Republican*, she cannot be trusted; he is a *lawyer* after all. In these instances the evaluation of the audience and context is based solely on the archetypal and stereotypical dimensions of the category with almost no reference to the actions. In fact at a representational distance, actions are interpreted to affirm the category. In representational relationships, the person is said to represent the entire category — "All police and politicians are corrupt!" This is the least textured, least nuanced form of communication. Because the exchanges are based on very thin, and usually one-dimensional, awareness of the person, discourse is most influential, and there is much less of an available range for meaning making and action. Once a person has been effectively labeled – thug, terrorist, communist, feminist – knowledge of the category overwhelms any present action. One hallmark of a compressed narrative (Cobb, 2013) is that the dimensions of the conflict or the problem description become very simple and thinly textured. By this point all actors on all sides have taken on caricatured roles with a very narrow range of action and a very narrow range of meanings that could be made about their communication efforts.

The idea of distance is represented in Figures III- 9a, 9b, and 9c, below. The darker the background, the more opaque the communicative context, the more distance there is, and the greater the influence of discursive and historical cultural interpretive factors as opposed to presently available information.

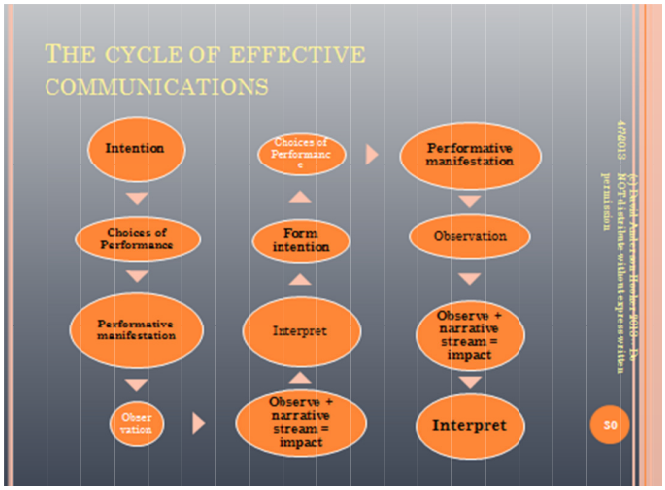


Figure III – 9a Distance of Communication Relational

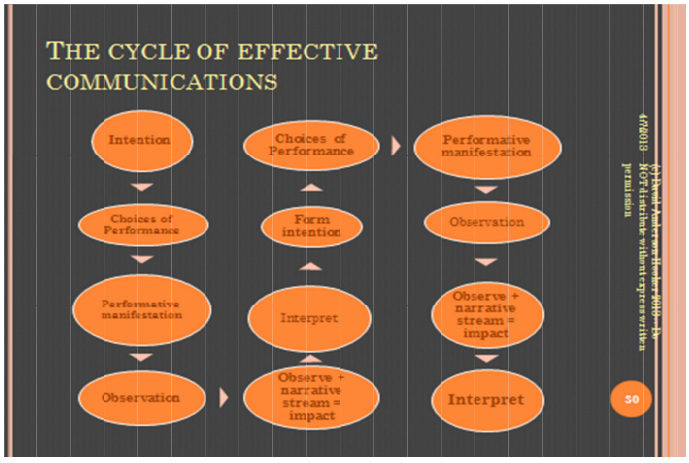


Figure III – 9b Distance of Communication – Referential

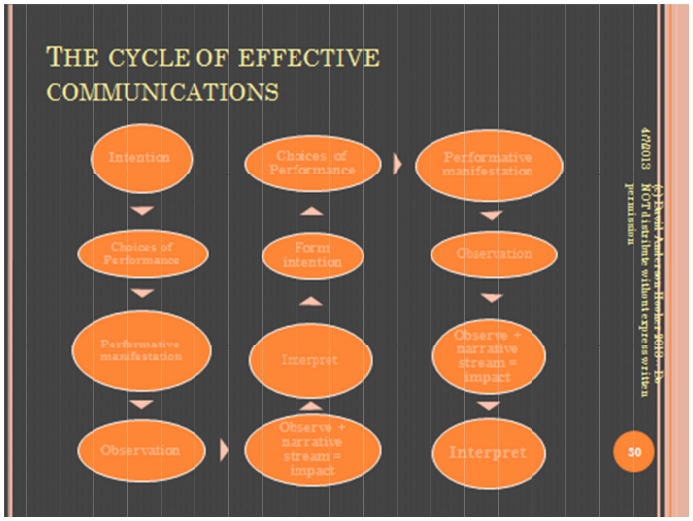


Figure III – 9c Distance of Communication – Representational

3.4.2.4vii Meaning yields impact

The story that the observation is ultimately placed into presents a limited range of available meanings to the observer. Among the available meanings, one is selected consciously or reflexively; the meaning of the observation based on the narrative stream determines the impact that the observer experiences, which in turn re-initiates the cycle of intention, performative choice, observation and meaning-making.

This is the basic flow and premises of the granular communications model. The model offers a framework through which to consider a person's meaning making. The various stages of meaning making are each places where someone might inquire into the smaller less visible aspects of the process. In each of these stages, discourse and cultural narratives and their effects on relationships can be unveiled, and when communications are misaligned, this process could create an immediate opportunity for establishing a more well-aligned communication. The granular communications model also has significant implications for deconstructing oppressive narratives, repairing damaged identities, identifying openings for action, shifting discursive positions, and identifying lines of flight towards community transformation.

3.5 Implications for Granular Communication Analysis and Inquiry

There are multiple implications for research and practice that derive from the granular communications model. There are also significances for the current study, three of which I will lift up at this point. In analyzing the content produced by the two dialogue methods in this study, I conduct a power/knowledge analysis based on the framing of Michel Foucault (1994). However, "[t]racing and exposing lines of power is not, Foucault's main purpose, in Deleuze's reading of his work. Nor should it be the end focus of professional practice. Rather our practice should be aimed at investigating the possibilities for the creation of new and more satisfying lives and relationships" (Winslade, 2009, p. 337). Granular communication allows the inquirer and communicators to move far beyond a power analysis by considering the new openings for action that are made possible by the awareness of the influences of discourse, cultural narratives and relations of power on relational patterns and practices at the heart of community formation.

"Power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (Foucault, 1976, p. 86). Foucault describes *disciplinary power* as the effect of discourses that cause people to control their behaviors in alignment with a desired state of being. The self-regulation through adherence to particular discourses is the operation of disciplinary power. Again, granular communication unveils these relations of power in ways that increases the sense of collective agency by allowing individual and collective discursive position shifts. This also is the seed of identifying lines of flight away from the oppressive trajectory. Deleuze conceptualizes power as operating to propel people in a particular trajectory. A line of flight is any departure from the already and always present trajectory of the dominant discourse (Winslade, 2009). The process of slowing down the meaning-making process and identifying the multiple options for meaning, emotion and action allows parties to imagine a variety of lines of flight and then project themselves towards a preferred line. Although constantly influenced by discourse, some change is possible. And the change does not have to be substantial to lead to substantial transformation.

The third implication is the most significant: "Lines of flight do not need to be 180˚ turnarounds. They might be subtle shifts of direction" (Winslade, 2009, p. 341). Winslade recalls an illustration that Deleuze used to make the point of the significance of small changes. The story is of a sailor travelling from a shore to an island. If the trajectory of the boat is even one half degree veering to the east or west, because of the distance of travel, the island will be missed all together. Similarly with communities, there is an already and always predictable trajectory that is the result of the relations of power that establish the marginalizing and oppressive conditions and institutions. Following Deleuze, I suggest that even the minor shifts that can be demonstrated through a granular communications inquiry can have substantial, even radically transformative outcomes for a community.

Based on the assumptions and presuppositions outlined, and now advanced as my emerging model of granular communications, I modified the focused conversation process.

3.6 Constructionist and Narrative Modification of ORID in Light of Granular Communications

I drew from the ORID and reconceptualized the dialogic flow to reflect social constructionist principles; the two modifications I introduced were 1) a specific focus on discursive position (Davies & Harré, 1990) and the effect of alignment on each viewer's perspective and meaning-making process; and 2) following the granular communications model, an explicit insertion of participants' personal narratives as the foundation for their meaning making. I briefly summarize the modifications and their rationales below:

Modification 1

At the outset, I wanted participants to have an increased awareness of any particular perspective that might have informed their viewing of the play. To do this, I asked them to reflect on whether they identified strongly or aligned with a particular character in the play.

> ***Facilitator****: So I want to invite you all to do something. Can you identify which among the characters in the play you most closely align with? Like, if you were trying to understand your own life story or you were making a connection to challenges or the way that your life is structured or whatever, who among the characters in the play, if any, did you align with?*

This *alignment* assumption activity precedes even the observation phase of a focused conversation model. In my granular communication thesis, the role of *narrative streams* is significant in determining even what observations are possible. The ICA model assumes that observations themselves are neutrally made and valueless until emotions are experienced and the observer's meaning-making process begins to operate, all in the realm of mini-seconds. However, what we observe is largely shaped by the perspective we have previously assumed. This can be seen in two ways.

First way of understanding narrative streams preceding observation is in Chris Argyris's ladder of inference (see fig. III-7 above) (cited by Senge, 2006), observations are made in a closed loop based on the types of assumptions and beliefs that a person holds about the world. A similar idea is found in constructionist thought. However, whereas Argyris's ladder suggests that this meaning-making process happens at the level of the individual, constructionist framing suggests that

the meaning is made in co-action with others and influenced by the power/knowledge nexus. Even further, a constructionist framing also supposes that discourses and cultural narratives shape whether an observation is even possible and the available range of meanings that can be made. Moreover, meaning making is neither static nor one-dimensional as supposed by the ladder of inference. Each person is a multi-relational, multi-being, occupying positions in multiple discourses at the same time at all times (Gergen K. J., 2009b; Winslade, 2009). Each perspective and relationship involves a different discursive combination from which to make meaning. Any particular observation is already being framed by the previously-established assumptions that specify which data is informative and valuable to observe in a given context.

The second way of understanding narrative streams preceding observation is to understand that, in order for a person to have an experience of something, the thing itself must exist in the person's language and within a preliminary context that offers some meaning. Hirschmann (2006) says, "There is a 'there' there, but as soon as you recognize its existence, it enters language and begins to be constructed" (p. 203). The construction occurs inside of the various narratives that were originally used to transmit the meanings that are now available for application to this current observation. Language exists within particular discursive and recursive contexts. Without context within which to situate an observation, it is arguable whether an observation is possible.

This inability or failure to observe is very much the case in day-to-day life. There are many examples of how people, once primed to look for a certain set of observations, will completely fail to notice other material that is equally observable. A popular example of this phenomenon is captured in the series of *awareness* videos produced for public service advertisements over the past few years in the United States.[23] In the present study, it was important to begin to notice the way people made observations, even in conversations about the play. Society, or the cultural contexts through which one is socialized, give the primers that allow certain observations and render others unavailable. While participants were not invited or instructed to base their responses on constructionist principles, it was the framing I adopted to interpret and make meaning of their conversation.

[23] Among the most popular is http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KB_lTKZm1Ts a basketball awareness test

An ICA-focused conversation is well designed to slow down the interpretive and decisional processes so that these become more observable as part of a dialogue. It does not, however, incorporate the constructionist frame or introduce the notion of relationality as the source of meaning. It also does not utilize the narrative or performative metaphors that are foundational for the application of a narrative mediation approach to community engagement that I sought to design. By focusing on an individual participant's *feelings* (reflection) the ORID method does not reveal the relational and contextual aspects of meaning making. The ORID model *R-reflective* level inquiry asks participants to try to articulate their individual feelings. From a constructionist perspective, feelings, and the verbalized expressions of them, are inherently inaccessible unless understood in a relational framing.

> If we view emotional expressions as culturally constructed and performed, we not only avoid the problems of stasis and imperialism, we also open new vistas of possibility … From this perspective emotions are not the private possessions of the individual mind, but are the property of ongoing relationships. Your 'joy' is not yours but ours, my 'anger' is ours, and so on…
>
> [T]he relational orientation suggests that all our pleasures – the joys of tastes, smells, colors, eroticism, and the like - are not the result of individual biology. Rather, we owe all our pleasures to our existence in relationships. (Bruffee, 1986, pp. 104-106)

In preparing for the dialogue, there was considerable sensitivity expressed by both Frampton and Lane that a direct discussion of Greensboro too early in the process could prove polarizing. This reflects a sensitivity and difficulty in having this type of dialogue. Even if the intention is to have a conversation about race, there is a hesitance to do so. Lane suggested that community members might need "practice with dialogue" before being expected to actually engage in dialogue about Greensboro. The granular communications model posits that individual perceptions and interpretations were framed not so much by the actual observations participants made but rather by the specific narrative streams through which they interpreted those observations. Many of those narrative streams would be based on their lived experience of Greensboro and the primary discourse and cultural narratives of their socialization. The ORID model was first modified to identify the role or perspective

from which participants might have observed the action in the play. Doing this brings into view not only issues of perspective but also emphasizes the play of pre-existing narrative. The method, therefore, incorporates principles of narrative inquiry, which will be discussed next.

3.7 Narrative Inquiry

> If we favor a constructionist view of social life, we are immediately drawn to the importance of language. It is through language that we create the sense of the real and the good, that we create our histories and our destinies. With this realization has grown an immense body of research on discourse … A central topic in the study of discourse is the study of narrative. As investigators reason, one of our major ways of making sense in the world is through stories. We understand our lives as a story, history as a story, the cosmos as a story, and so on. In effect, the story form structures our understanding and thus our actions. (Gergen & Gergen, 2003, pp. 60-61)

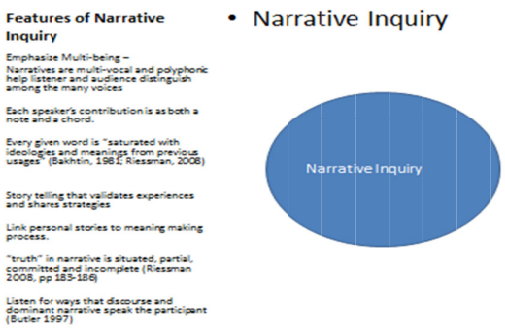


Figure III - 10 Narrative Inquiry as essential component of NMFC

Beyond the constraints and strictures placed on our realities by metaphor, people live inside of and out of their own stories and the coordinated stories of their communities. "Experience … is the stories people live. People live stories and in the telling of them reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006, p. 415). The idea of narrative inquiry then is to collect stories – those of life and those of literature – as a means of understanding people's experience. Figure III-10 presents the features of narrative inquiry that are components of the narratively modified focused conversation process. The representation of narrative inquiry within a circle may appear at first consideration to be insignificant. The circle is presented as a constant reminder that all of this process occurs within the

container of the focus group methods. When thinking about narrative inquiry, I use the conceptualization of Connelly and Clandinin (2006), who wrote

> Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way, narrative is the phenomenon studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. (p. 477)

The practice of narrative inquiry is intended to hear how people language their experience, not with a view towards verifying the experience, but, rather, to understand the experience of experience through the linguistic modes with which it is animated (Riessman, 1993; 2008). At the granular level, we would investigate the narrative, the choice of narrative streams, word choices, and, following Lakoff and Johnson (1980), selection of metaphors. Each of these gives information about the narrative and discursive sources from which persons identify the range of available meanings, the appropriate emotional performances, and sequence of actions that can be taken within the context that they understand to exist.

The present research draws on narrative inquiry methods in the sense that the focused, directed, and heavily facilitated conversations invite story-telling but within constraints that often are not imposed in a *pure* narrative inquiry. The focused conversation of conversation number one was an opportunity for participants to present only snippets of their complex individual narratives. Conversation number two focused on the practice of languaging a collective community narrative. Like qualitative research in general and constructionist framings, narrative inquiry as a whole is interdisciplinary. Specific approaches tend to be shaped by interests and assumptions embedded in researchers' disciplines (Chase, 2008).

Chase identifies five major approaches to narrative inquiry: 1) a psychological approach that focuses on the described quality of lived experiences; 2) sociological perspectives that focus on language as expressive of identity; 3) other sociological approaches that rely on in-depth interviews and analysis of the range of linguistic

practices to understand how meaning is being made concerning one specific aspect of a person's life; 4) narrative ethnography; and 5) autoethnographic research.

While many in-depth interviews had preceded this engagement, this particular method does not involve, nor does it require, in-depth interviews. Following the Freirian method of emancipatory discourse, in-depth interviews certainly supported this process by identifying some generative themes for later consideration. Yet this was not a necessary step in the process. The inquiry method was a hybrid form of psychological inquiry focusing on lived experience, identified as Chase's first model, and the sociological model, identified as the third approach, that seeks to understand language as a practice of meaning making. The consideration of language digs down to the smallest dimension recognizing that every given word is "saturated with ideologies and meanings from previous usages" (p. 73) (Bakhtin, 1981; Riessman, 2008). This recognition is reinforced in the granular model of communication and embedded in the model of inquiry that I now advance as *narratively modified focused conversation*.

3.8 Narratively Modified Focused Conversation

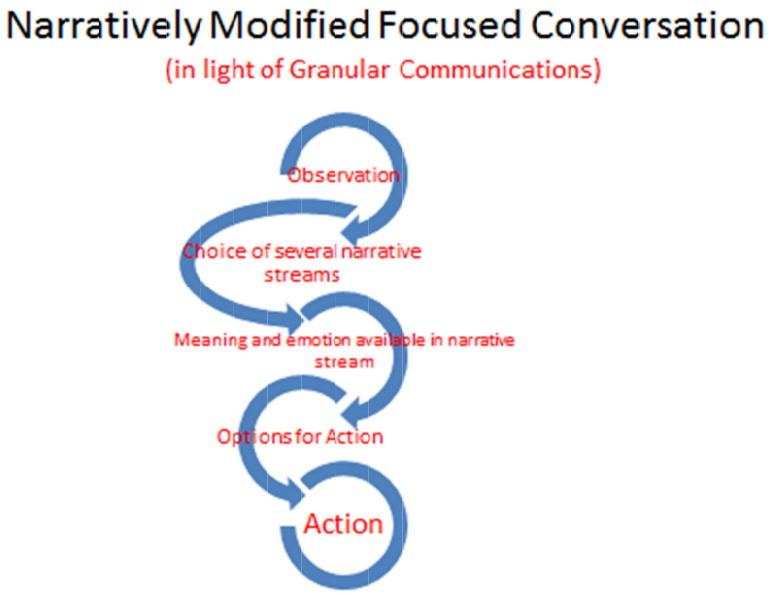


Figure III -11 - Flow of Narratively Modified Focused Conversations

Figure III-11 (above) presents the flow of a narratively modified focused conversation. The flow suggests the types of questions that would be asked at each stage. Based on the narrative and constructionist reconceptualization of the ORID

model, the newly established flow of a narratively modified focused conversation would be

a. Ask for an *observation***.**
b. Identify at least one and preferably *multiple narrative streams* that the observer could utilize to make sense of the observation. Always ask for stories that convey divergent and, when available, opposite meanings. Determine which among the stories the observer used to make meaning of the observation at the moment.
c. Within the particular story or narrative stream chosen, identify the *"proper" emotions* (and the appropriate performances) *and meanings* to be made. Notice that even the *proper* emotion has multiple possible performances, and invite a consideration of what specifically about the context or audience might shape the chosen performance.
d. Drilling down even further, invite the observer to try to identify as exhaustively as possible the range of *options for action* based on the meaning and emotion attached to the observation.
e. As a second step in considering options for action, notice with the observer whether there are options for action that would have been available in any of the other divergent narrative streams.
f. Among the available options for action, ask the observer to state a *preference for action* and offer a rationale for that choice as opposed to others. The facilitator may want to invite some exploration of counter and even non-sensical options that could test the edges of the discourse in which the options for meaning and action are being perceived.

The flow is presented as though it is a linear inquiry similar to the focused conversation. While it might occur that way, the facilitator should also be prepared to proceed through in a more cyclical manner. The identification of preferred actions, for instance might bring to mind a particular narrative stream that would make the preferred action available.

Value of collective or community focus *groups* as opposed to individual focused conversations – The narratively modified focus conversation process could very efficiently and effectively be implemented on a one-on-one basis. In a counseling or leadership coaching moment, this might be the chosen approach.

However, there are multiple value-added propositions that come with doing this work in group settings. First, group work immediately expands the audience and multiplies the relational flows of power and influence. Chase (2008) also indicates that an important aspect of conducting narrative inquiry is to pay attention to the audience considering not just the present and implicit audience that is influencing the way the narration is being performed but also who needs to hear the narration. What audiences would benefit by hearing and what audiences would the narrator gain benefit from being heard by? In this model two significant audiences were created for each narrator: An audience of peers and fellow travelers in the realm of social justice and community change and also an audience of the power brokers and elites of the community. Following Deleuze, the audience might also be virtual. Winslade (2009) describes the conceptualization of the virtual in this way: "Deleuze and Guattari (1994) use some concepts that I think offer an alternative description of what Michael White was referring to as the ''absent but implicit.' They make a distinction between what is virtual and what is actual. The virtual is not, they argue, the opposite of the 'real,' it is indeed real, but it amounts to a reality that has not been or is not being actualized. Things are actualized through being differentiated" (p. 340).

During the early in-person individual interviews conducted throughout the region, we committed to coming back to participants to share our early findings. Many individual interviewees, for a variety of reasons, would not have been invited to participate in the focused group sessions – elected officials, toxic and polarizing personalities, and certain controllers of economic leverage in the community (CEO's of major employers, superintendents of school districts, and heads of major philanthropic organizations). This decision ultimately becomes a limitation to testing the efficacy of the model. In the process for community engagement that was designed as a result of these conversations, these categories of people were not excluded but for the pilot testing of the model they were. Because we had spoken with many of them during the early interview processes, they were all invited to a *findings session*, and many of them came. At this findings session, we could articulate the narratives developed by the focus group participants in an anonymous fashion.

3.9 Conversation II

The conversation model is designed to support planting seeds for an action agenda. The model (see figure III-12 below), infuses constructionist, specifically narrative, principles and has many discursive features that unveil the performativity associated with current community conditions. Being aware of the guiding concerns of restorative justice, and incorporating collective narrative practices while applying narrative mediation principles within a circle or conferencing focus group model made it is possible to unveil subjugated knowledges; affirm the current work of the participants; allow them to share strategies of resistance and struggle; and have a conversation that results in a remarkably comprehensive, Foucauldian power/knowledge analysis.

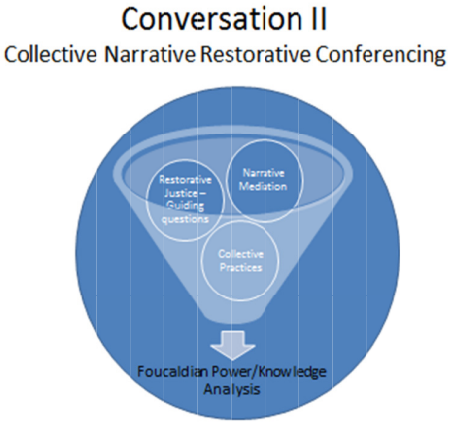


Figure III - 12 - Conversation II – Collective Narrative Restorative Conferencing

3.9.1 Theory of methodological bricoles for conversation II.

The engagement method for the second conversation was developed as an innovation in community engagement as an emergent response to the conditions presented by the community members (not to say that these are the conditions of the entire community). The method used was a reconceptualization of the narrative conferencing model described by Winslade and Williams (2012). The method was chosen in order to 1) infuse the community dialogue with constructionist ideas and metaphors; 2) lay a continuing foundation for narrative mediation as the trajectory of the community change; 3) explore the role of restorative justice principles in shifting both perceptions and the lived experience of community with regard to racial

and ethnic distinctions; and 4) further establish and investigate the 'performative' metaphor.

The narrative restorative conferencing approach also takes several of the steps spelled out for narrative mediation. Specifically, it uses externalizing and mapping the effects of the conflict, unveiling previously subjugated histories, identifying alternative narratives, and inviting the expression of a preference among the available narratives. This approach to community engagement is innovative in the sense that

- The application of the method was to collective harm and historical (even multigenerational) conflict;
- It included an attempt to externalize and map the effects of longstanding, historical harms;
- It sought to crack open a compressed narrative more so than developing resonance and harmony among competing or conflicting narratives; and
- It was an effort to actually begin to shift and undo historical harm.

The components of the process were informed by the theory and practices of narrative mediation, collective narrative practice, and restorative justice. This method of conversation produced a thoroughgoing power/knowledge analysis for the community that could serve as a basis for future collective action. Each of those component parts will be discussed briefly below. None will receive an extensive treatment in that they have each been described more fully in other places.

3.10 Narrative Mediation

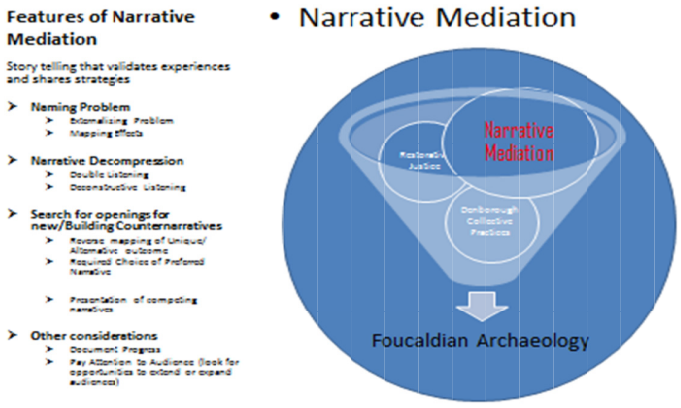


Figure III - 13 - Logic of Narrative Mediation

Many of the insights of social constructionist and poststructuralist theory have been combined in conflict transformation processes that are part of the *narrative turn* in constructionism. Full descriptions of those processes have been made elsewhere under the monikers of narrative mediation (Monk & Winslade, 2013; Winslade, 2009; Winslade & Cotter, 1997; Winslade & Monk, 2001; 2008), narrative therapy (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk et al., 1997; Parry & Doan, 1994; Taliaferro, Casstevens, & Gunby, 2013; White, 2007; White & Epston, 1990), narrative psychology and narrative psychiatry (Mehl-Madrona, 2007; 2010), and other narrative approaches (Kostera, 2006; Nelson, 2001). The primary metaphor and methodology of each of these practices are that people live into and live out of stories and that the available range of behaviors (both conforming and rebellious) is inscribed within the contours of the stories. Winslade and Monk (2001) describe the storying process in this way

> The narrative perception is that people tend to organize their experiences in story form. The narrative metaphor draws attention to the ways in which we use stories to make sense of our lives and relationships. People grow up amid a multitude of competing narratives that help shape how they see themselves and others. They tell stories about themselves and about others. They act both out of and into these stories, shaping the direction of the ongoing plot as they do so. Descriptions of problems are typically told in narrative terms. Such problem narratives have often been rehearsed and elaborated over and over again by participants in a conflict. (p. 3)

The narrative mediation approach is not simply a model of conflict resolution through storytelling. In addition to ways of speaking, the metaphor of *narrative* is a way of thinking (Winslade & Monk, 2001) and a way of thinking about thinking (Bruner, 1986).

> From Bruner's perspective, people construct their intentions and enact their 'performances of meaning' with the characteristics of a well-formed story in mind more than with facts, realities or cause-and-effect logic … [A]longside this 'landscape of action' in which people construct intentions, set goals, act, and create situations, there is a landscape of consciousness, in which people know, think and feel. (Winslade & Monk, 2001, p. 52)

Based on these ideas, the stories that people tell are not evaluated in a narrative inquiry on the basis of verifiable accuracy, but rather the listener is seeking to understand how meanings are made, the emotion and action trajectories created, and what, if any, constraints are embedded in the story. It is also important to consider how discourse and cultural narrative shape the narratives. Often, in circumstances of interpersonal conflict, the stories that people are locked into create different plots, position each of the actor-characters differently – usually each actor is the victim of the other's wrongdoing — and have often predetermined plot lines. Over time the narrative and associated actions take on the repetitive and symbolic consistency that Butler conceptualized as *performativity*. The interweaving of the two stories and the performance of meaning through those stories becomes tightly woven and stable. The narrative approach to conflict resolution focuses on shifting the story from a conflict-saturated story to a more solution-bound narrative that allows the parties to go on together (Winslade & Cotter, 1997).

As the practices and approaches to narrative mediation have developed and refined over their short history, Winslade and Monk (2008) have identified nine *hallmarks of narrative mediation* processes. In the current study, because the intention was to test whether a trajectory established by using narrative mediation principles would advance the cause of social justice for a community, it will be important to assess the process first to determine whether any of the hallmarks were present in the process.

3.10.1 The nine (9) hallmarks of narrative mediation.

a) *Assume people live their lives through stories.* This hallmark goes beyond the consideration of storytelling and autobiography. It should be assumed that stories 'serve a shaping or constitutive purpose in people's lives' (p.4). The stories can be lived, told, cultural artefacts, or literary and mythological. The discursive and recursive patterns in the langue used to tell stories reflects norms, standards, and relations of power that shape lives and constitute identities.
b) *Avoiding essentialist assumptions* is a constructionist principle which suggests that there is not an essential core being inside of people that is expressed through language. Rather, people's expressions are understood as appropriate performances for the narratives that they live into and live out of.

c) Engage in *double listening*. This concept reflects the presence of multiple stories from anyone perspective and also the premise that people are situated in several stories at the same time and several relationships and discourses in each of those stories. Narrative mediation listens for what is said and what's not.
d) *Build an externalizing conversation*. In line with all of narrative assumptions, seek to build stories that locate the problem as a character or artefact in the story and not an essential aspect of any of the people involved in the conflict.
e) View the *problem story as a restraint*. This hallmark builds on hallmarks a, b, and d. Assuming that people live into and out of stories, assuming the language and performance they chose is recursive and appropriate for the stories they are in and assuming the story exists to be interrogated, then the story itself is the location of the constraints.
f) Listen for *discursive positioning*. Inside the problem story, people are given positions as characters and plot elements. Somewhere in the way people are positioned shapes the trajectory of their language and performances. If these positions can be shifted, the plots and characterizations have the opportunity to change as well.
g) Identify *openings to an alternative story*. In looking for opportunities to shift the story we listen both for what is said (the problem story) and also what is not (double listening) to uncover material from which to build an alternate, hopefully preferable, story.
h) *Re-author the relationship* story. Based on the newly uncovered and quilted story pieces, the possibility exists to tell a new relationship story that lacks the constraints of the previous story.
i) Document progress. Conversations disappear. As people move towards the practice of living into re-authored stories, at each stage of the process it is helpful to have markers, symbols and monuments of achievement. There are many ways to document progress.

A full discussion of each of the hallmarks is presented elsewhere (Winslade & Monk, 2008, pp. 3-39).

This same set of principles involved in narrative mediation can contribute to Nelson's (2001) prescription for *narrative identity repair* by first fully mapping the dominant narrative and noticing how it acts as a constraint in all aspects of a person's life and also noticing the cultural narratives and other discursive factors that

position a person in certain ways in relationship to the narratives they are living in and out of. When this noticing occurs, the person can better see the cracks and fissures of the dominant narrative and name some of its inconsistencies, illogical propositions, ethical blindnesses, and other weaknesses. It is in these cracks, fissures, illogics, and inconsistencies that narrative mediation first explores in search of alternative narratives. These are the same places where Nelson advises us to look to construct a counterstory, or what Cobb (2013) calls the "better-formed story." These unique outcomes and alternative narratives are also foundational for developing and then performing the preferred narrative.

Narrative mediation is built on principles that are the basis of narrative therapy. It is therefore possible to look at certain applications of narrative therapy to gain insight and inspiration for the work of narrative mediation and narrative restorative conferencing. One promising application of narrative therapy for the work of decompressing conflict-saturated community narratives is the work of Taliaferro, Casstevens, and Gunby (2013). Working with African American students on a campus in another city in North Carolina, they apply narrative therapy practices in conjunction with Critical Race Theory with the stated aim of establishing what they conceptualize as "operational citizenship" (p. 36).

They highlight certain significant aspects of narrative therapy for this specific work:

> Narrative therapy utilizes a social constructionist approach to working with clients, which includes a focus on the client's narrative and subjective understanding of experience in the context of: (a) witnessing or acknowledging that experience, as well as later alternative narratives and experiences; (b) externalizing client problems as separate from self, i.e., as extrinsic rather than intrinsic to the person; (c) finding exceptions to problem-saturated stories; and (d) developing narratives for using witnesses to develop an audience for success, and widening or expanding this circle of witnesses, is another key part of narrative therapy. (p. 38)

They summarize how narrative therapy and critical race theory support their work:

> Narrative therapy, particularly in combination with 'operational citizenship' and Critical Race Theory, can therefore assist clients in deconstructing dominant Western European socio-cultural influences that under-privilege, disempower, oppress and/or marginalise individuals, families and communities (e.g., Benson, 2005; White, 2007). Narrative

> therapy conceptualises oppressive aspects of culture as dominant discourses, i.e., as narratives made up of stories that exist within so-called grand narratives or meta-narratives. (p. 42)

The conceptualization of *operational citizenship* is an important one for this work because it characterizes at the individual level the experience of a full performative range. When individuals have rights and opportunities on campus and feel as though they can exercise those rights and advantage the opportunities and have experiences that reinforce this sense, that would be operational citizenship. It seems that an expanded notion of operational citizenship could be explored as a metaphor that embodies the preferred narrative of the participants in the Greensboro dialogues as well.

3.11 Collective Narrative Practice

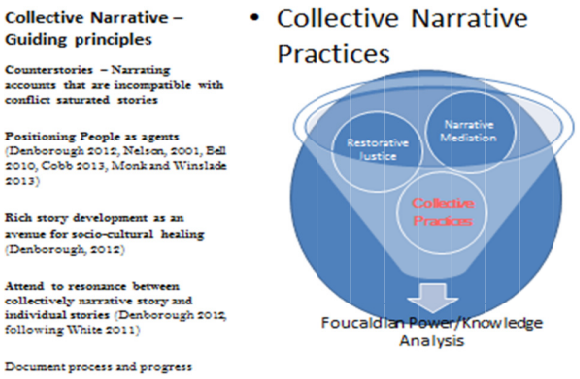


Figure III - 14 Guiding Principles Collective Narrative Practice

Figure III- 14, above, identifies where collective narrative practices interact with other aspects of the Narrative Restorative Conferencing model. There are a number of examples within the existing literature of narrative therapy or narrative mediation approaches to conflict between adults and children within a family (White, 2006b); within couple relations (Freedman & Combs, 2002; Monk & Winslade, 2013; White, 2004b); within organizations (Winslade, Monk, and Holmgren, 2008); or within schools (Selwyn College, Lewis, & Cheshire, 1998; Winslade & Williams, 2012). Denborough noted in describing two different approaches to collective engagement that the application of narrative mediation and therapy practices to collective and historical trauma is unique. Denborough states

> While there are a number of examples of narrative therapy principles (White & Epston, 1990; White, 2007) being applied to 'mediation' (Winslade & Monk, 2000) and 'conflict resolution' (Winslade & Monk, 2008) … *The use of narrative practices within the realms of 'peace-building' (Lederach, 1995), 'reconciliation', 'social healing' (Lederach & Lederach, 2010), 'living side by side' (Denborough, White, Claver, Freedman and Combs, in press) are not significantly developed.*

In this same regard John Paul Lederach also notes that such approaches have not been developed for collective and historical conflicts. "Denborough identifies the several principles of narrative therapy that can have resonance with such collective and historical conflicts. Specifically he points to "'counterstories', 'positioning people as agents', 'rich story development as an avenue to conflict dissolution', and 'resonance'" (Denborough, 2010, p. 1), and he proposes that these approaches "can be combined in responses to collective conflicts – whether current or historic." (p. 1)

The practice that Denborough developed incorporate these collective principles in his community engagement work was what he calls *"The Kite of Life*" (Denborough, 2011). The approach Denborough takes is very important in advancing the use of narrative principles for collective work in ways that are similar in intention to narrative restorative conferencing. Denborough's Kite of Life identifies how people from different generations are positioned differently in relationship to a shared value – like respect-- and then moves them towards a resonance. The narrative restorative conferencing model is designed to identify internal dissensus in dominant narratives, crack open tightly compressed narratives, unveil the previously subjugated knowledges and little known narratives of resistance and the *virtual* aspects of the existing community narrative and build *resonance* from what is newly revealed.

Several principles of collective practice that Denborough describes are informative for this current work. Specifically, I also sought to locate problems outside of the individuals and place them in their broader social context, elicit special knowledges through storytelling, richly describe actions of common purpose, look for and map or trace storylines of mutual contribution, and allow participants to share skills and experiences that positively implicate others.

3.12 Restorative Justice

Figure III - 15 Guiding Principles/Questions of Restorative Justice

Zehr (2002) summarizes his conceptualization of restorative justice as "based on an old, commonsense understanding of wrongdoing" (p. 19). Restorative justice, as framed in Fig III-15, is a set of principles that focus on victims of wrongdoing, seek to address the harms they have experienced, create a space for accountability, while understanding that the central obligation of any justice process should be to put right the harms. Historically, when the State (or Crown) intervened in cases of wrongdoing, the focus was placed on retribution. Determining that the wrong was not a violation of the victim but rather a violation of a State or Crown rule, the central question for justice concerned the level of punishment that would suit the violation. A punishment-focused approach to justice often disregarded the harms done to victims and needs created by those harms. This would leave the wrongdoer punished and the victim still having unmet needs. The restorative justice paradigm seeks to reorient justice towards the meeting of obligations created by violations. Restorative Justice has five principles that are embedded in the guiding questions (see Table 1 below).

In the past three decades, a wide variety of programs and processes, with varying degrees of fidelity to these principles, have claimed the mantle of *restorative* justice. Among the many practices that claim the mantle of restorative justice are the multifaceted Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. As discussed earlier, there are reservations as to whether restorative principles and practices can be used to redress societal and multi-generational harms, especially when the performativity of the harm has become endemic in almost every socializing institution and consequently

Table 1 Restorative Justice Guiding Principles and Questions

Question	Principle
Who has been harmed?	Victim centered? The harm is not the property of the state or government
What are their needs?	Primary emphasis on addressing needs of the victim
Who has the obligation to fill these needs?	Offender's obligations are to make things right as much as possible
Who has a stake in the situation?	Justice process belongs to the community. Inclusive solution development (including those harmed and those who did the harming
What is the best process to involve as many stakeholders as possible?	Process is important

affects identity formation and most relational patterns and practices. Parsing the arguments concerning the utility and application of restorative justice as a framework for practices of radical societal change is beyond the scope of this project. It is also for my purposes unnecessary to determine. I find the guiding questions valuable as a background for structuring the conversation.

Specifically, I sought to understand how the participants language or give expression to historical and continuing harms; what are the performance and behavioral ways they suggest as necessary to repair the harm in the narrative, performative, and discursive realms; what were the independent and mutually held obligations; and the best processes to involve as many as possible in the process of solution seeking or conflict dissolution.

A restorative justice purist might suggest that it does not appear that restorative justice plays a large part in this process design. I would just observe that the circle processes, restorative conferencing, and inclusive process design are all expressive of the central principles of restorative justice. In this instance what we sought to restore or establish was the highest possible range and experience of agency for all members of the community, possibly characterized as *operational citizenship*.

3.12 Analytical Methods - Bricolage

As an early measure of assessment of these methods, it would be impossible to suggest whether they have broad applicability or enduring effects. What can be questioned at the outset is: 1) whether the process for developing the models was appropriate? 2) Are the methods experienced as valuable? and 3) Do the contents produced by the methods give early indication of their usefulness for radical transformation of the community? To make these assessments, I drew on 1) Turnbull's (2002) eight stages for constructionist theory development; 2) Heikkinen et al.'s (2012) five principles for validation of narrative inquiry with consideration also for the nine hallmarks of narrative mediation (Winslade & Monk, 2008); the principles of collective narrative engagement (Denborough, 2011); and 3) Foucault's (1994) framing of power/knowledge with consideration, following Winslade (2009) who draws on Deleuze for the possibility of establishing *lines of flight*.

Even with its bricolagic quality, the resulting project fully achieved the five measures of validity for narrative action research as defined by Heikkinen, et al. (2012). A narrative inquiry should 1) create a space in which the narrator is caused and supported to reflect more fully on the ways that his/her lived experience is socially constructed; 2) it should open new options for action to the extent that the narrator seeks to change that lived experience. In action research, 3) a preliminary inquiry and analysis should allow for a clear articulation of the shared problematic; 4) establish a foundation upon which to identify and develop a collective action agenda; and 5) when issues addressed are divisive social constructs, the analysis and action should move towards appropriate collective action and not reproduce or mimic the division or violence initially critiqued. Such are the standards by which the two new engagement practices described in this project will be assessed.

The combination of responses to the above-mentioned questions and assessment against the five measures of validity will ultimately be the test of whether the bricolage quilt so constructed is worth preserving and refining into art or whether it is better suited for scrap cloth.

The method development process was designed to support a larger theory-testing process. Therefore, the methods development process will be assessed based on the eight steps for theory-building.

3.12.1 Turnbull's eight steps for constructionist theory building.

Turnbull (2002) describes the process of theory building from a social constructionist perspective as neither a universal preoccupation nor even a valuable or appropriate activity. She notes that "Qualitative researchers are more interested in depth than breadth. They are interested in the following three functions: directing attention, organizing experience, and enabling useful responses (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, p. 41). This is a departure from the criteria of validity, reliability, and generalizability, while making few claims about the theory's ability to illuminate or direct action" (p. 318). The challenge to the concept of theory building is embedded in primary constructionist principles. Specifically, "if knowledge is constructed situationally through social interaction within communities or organizations, how do we know whether the theory that we are generating is 'valid,' and by what standards should we be judging validity?" (p. 319)

The present study is actually about the development and articulation of methods. Yet, the methods were developed to assist in the testing of a larger theoretical and practical question regarding the effectiveness and value of applying narrative mediation principles to collective action. In that regard it is important to consider whether the approach to development followed a pattern that supports theory building. In retrospect, I can say that the flow of my research followed the eight-staged pattern for theory building in social construction that has been presented by Turnbull:

1. Start with a question and select a social setting in which to conduct the study.
2. Decide what will be studied, under what circumstances, and over what period of time.
3. Gain access and entry to the site.
4. Select appropriate research strategy.
5. Using inductive analysis, adopt a system of coding of field notes and documents.
6. Look for the meaning and perspectives of the participants in the study.

7. Develop working models to explain the phenomena in the study.
8. Present findings in narrative form supported by evidence from the statements and behaviors recorded in interviews and notes; provide an interpretive commentary framing the key findings in the study. (Turnbull S. , 2002)

Chapters I and II described stages 1-4 of Turnbull's method: the processes of arriving at a question, deciding what will be studied, and gaining access and entry to the site. Chapters III, IV, V and VI argue in support of the methods developed as the contextually appropriate research strategies. Chapter VII and Chapter VIII present one of many possible field coding and data analysis strategies and seek to make a coherent and compelling narrative presentation of the results relying primarily on the words of the participants but also identifying where the facilitator's interventions were likely to have an effect. In addition, Turnbull suggests *authenticity* as one final qualitative measure to test the effectiveness of theory building. Turnbull posits that

> Constructionists seek authenticity or genuineness through the use of the direct accounts of those being researched and by remaining as close to the program data as possible, making clear where their own voices are being heard. Qualitative accounts can often be illuminating in conveying findings through narrative, as they are able to reach their audience at a number of levels. Constructionist research seeks to add to knowledge through the specific case chosen to research. The constructionist recognizes, however, that the resulting account of the situation will be a narrative that reflects and portrays not only the voices of those being researched but also the voice, experience, and background of the researcher. The constructionist seeks to find a rich interpretation of a messy situation. (p. 320)

3.12.2 Heikkinen's five principles of validation for narrative action research.

Even as Turnbull and others have eschewed the push towards qualitative validity, Heikkinen and his colleagues (Heikkinen H. L., Huttunen, Syrjala, & Pesonen, 2012; Heikkinen, Huttunen, & Syrjala, 2007) have proffered principles by which to assess validity even in qualitative and constructionist contexts. Without settling on one side of this debate, I chose to consider these validation principles as

well. It is clear that the proposed principles of validation are not designed to achieve the type of predict and control validation that is the hallmark of positivist and empiricist approaches to science and therefore do not interrupt the qualitative research framing that I used. Yet, they are measures of whether and to what extent approaches might be generalized for application in other settings. The five principles as described in the text box below are historical continuity, reflexivity, dialectics, workability and ethics, and evocativeness. Chapters V, VI, and VII, I comment on each of the first four of these principles, and then I offer a summation of my findings in Chapter VIII. The fifth principle, evocativeness, would be appropriate for readers to assess.

H.L.T. Heikkinen et al.'s **Validation principles for action research**

1. Principle of historical continuity

Analysis of the history of action: how has the action evolved historically?
Emplotment: how logically and coherently does the narrative proceed?

2. Principle of reflexivity

Subjective adequacy: what is the nature of the researcher's relationship with his/her object of research?
Ontologic and epistemologic presumptions: what are the researcher's presumptions of knowledge and reality?
Transparency: how does the researcher describe his/her material and methods?

3. Principle of dialectics

Dialogue: how has the researcher's insight developed in dialogue with others?
Polyphony: how does the report present different voices and interpretations?
Authenticity: how authentic and genuine are the protagonists of the narrative?

4. Principle of workability and ethics

Pragmatic quality: how well does the research succeed in creating workable practices?
Criticalness: what kind of discussion does the research provoke?
Ethics: how are ethical problems dealt with?
Empowerment: does the research make people believe in their own capabilities and possibilities to act and thereby encourage new practices and actions?

5. Principle of evocativeness

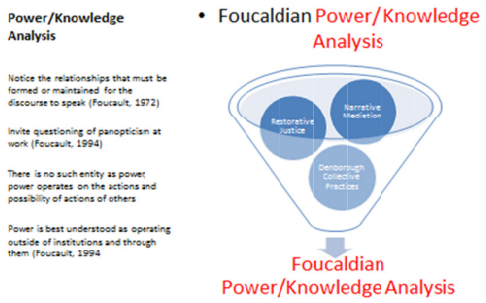
Evocativeness: how well does the research narrative evoke mental images, memories or emotions related to the theme?

Ultimately, the methods themselves should also have an internal logic, which for participatory action and Freirian emancipatory dialogue can be measured by whether the dialogue produces a foundation from which collective and specific actions could be taken that directly respond to the issues. The methods should also introduce the trajectory of narrative mediation through the model of narrative restorative community conferencing. The text of that conversation will be mapped, following White (2007), and will seek to determine whether the conversation exhibits the nine hallmarks of narrative mediation (Winslade & Monk, 2008).

There are also criteria by which the text of the conversations should be assessed. The narrative restorative community conferencing process was designed to result in an unveiling of the knowledge/power dynamics of the context of Greensboro. Fig III-16 presents some of the principles of a Foucauldian power/knowledge analysis. Chapter VII will present this power analysis.

3.12.3 Foucauldian *archeology/power* analysis.

Figure III - 16 Foucauldian Power/Knowledge Analysis



Finally, the results of this process should have several specific qualities against which the value of the methods could be assessed. First, the processes should occur for the participants as *organic*, meaning that the participants should feel that the process was something we were doing together and not that outside academic experts were telling them where to look or what to see. Secondly, the process and outcome should be both *democratic* and *collective* in that they could hear and recognize each of their individual contributions to the problem-solving process while acknowledging that new knowledge was created by their collective involvement that could not have occurred without each and all of them participating. Third, following Turnbull, results should convey a sense of *authenticity;* the analysis that they developed would have to ring true to their context and be applicable to the development of an action plan. Finally, the results should be *revelatory* – the analytical framework should be sufficiently different than anything they had participated in previously, so as to appear fresh and exciting.

3.13 Why Not Critical Race Theory?

For a study that considers race and oppression, a fair question could be posed by a reader as to "why does this study not use Critical Race Theory as an analytical framework"? Quoting from Taliaferro et al (2013):

> Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the 1970s in response to Critical Legal Studies' inadequate treatment of issues of race and racism in the American legal … In order to examine issues of power and race, as

> described by DeCuir and Dixson (2004), Critical Race Theory involves 5 key tenets: (a) Counterstorytelling (Delgado, 1989); (b) Permanence of Racism (Bell, 1992, 1995); (c) Whiteness as Property (Harris, 1993); (d) Interest Convergence (Bell, 1980); and (e) Critique of Liberalism, including colorblindness, myth of meritocracy, and incremental change (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Gotanda, 1991). Specifically, the five tenets work in tandem to challenge the role racism plays in the legal arena as well as other aspects of society. Each tenet provides a unique perspective on understanding how racism is infiltrated and perpetuated (p. 37).

Further, regarding the work of CRT, Ford and Airhihenbuwa (2010) note:

> Although the term "theory" appears in its name, Critical Race Theory is not like behavior change or epidemiological theories. Rather, it is an iterative methodology for helping investigators remain attentive to equity while carrying out research, scholarship, and practice. It also urges scholars to work to transform the hierarchies they identify through research. Critical Race Theory integrates transdisciplinary methodologies that draw on theory, experiential knowledge, and critical consciousness to illuminate and combat root causes of what critical race theorists describe as 'structural racism'. (p 39)

I have chosen not to utilize CRT as an analytical or methodological approach because, while CRT has a critically important lens for the work, three of its tenets are based in a philosophical stance to which I am offering reconsideration.

The CRT action intention towards equity is vital to community change scholarship. The recognition of the need for narrative repair, and its attempts towards narrative deconstruction and narrative identity repair as an aspect of counterstory telling is also vital. The methods developed in this study have a similar alignment and focus with that particular tenet of CRT. In some ways the methods presented in this study diverge from the other tenets, and yet in other ways the CRT tenets are accounted for. The *permanence of racism and Whiteness as property* are constructs imbedded in the cultural discourse and dominant narratives of the community. In the methods presented in this study, I operate with a primary presupposition, *The People Aren't the Problem. The Problem is the Problem.* This approach allows the facilitator of these methods to operate from a stance where racism and property value of Whiteness are not internalized and essential aspects of those who would benefit from them or be disadvantaged by them. Rather, they are

constructs that exist within a problem story and different parties respond differently to those aspects of the dominant narrative. The externalizing of the conflict story through the proposed methods allows racism and the property value of Whiteness to be externalized so that both those who benefit from and those who are marginalized by the response to these constructs can stand together outside this story and see the types of performance that could shift positions related to them. Further, liberal strategies are also responses to aspects of the problem story.

Finally CRT also adopts an explicitly structuralist stance with regard to race/racism. Because all of these aspects are reflections of relations of power and because they do not adopt a discursive and constructionist approach to the ideas, I choose to diverge from CRT and adopt the methods for both implementation and analysis described in this study.

Summary and Transition

In this chapter, I have presented the epistemological framing of the research space; the specific theoretical foundations for the actual questions being posed; the theoretical undergirding for each of the *bricoles* that are pulled together to compose the overarching bricolage of this study. Up until this point, I have presented the broad sweep of the bricolage that is my life and the broad theoretical foundations for the work. At this point, the journey stops to drill down.

The next section is dedicated to analysis. Chapter IV presents the methodology in more detail and also describes specifically how the data was recorded and analyzed. Chapters V, VI, and VII analyze the methods themselves (V and VI) and the product of the methods (VII). While I have described the outline of the analysis for the methods and the content, each chapter will restate in greater depth the specific mode of analysis for that portion of the data.

Finally, Section III is brief and reflective, containing only one chapter and an Epilogue. In Chapter VIII, I summarize the findings and the limitations of the current study, consider the possibilities for further development of the methods, and identify implications for further research and practice. I also offer a few words about what I now know that I did not at the beginning of this phase of the journey. The Epilogue frames the conclusion in terms of a musical metaphor that helps to position the understandings developed in this study to be taken up again in a co-active meaning-making process.

CHAPTER IV – METHODS

4.1 Methods

Chapter IV includes a review of the ethical considerations for this study and how those were addressed, research methods and design appropriateness, a brief restatement of the context in which the study was conducted, and a description of participants and dialogue setting. In addition, Chapter IV describes the methods of data collection, the significance and limitations of the study, and the chosen methods for data analysis. This study was a qualitative research study conducted within a stance of social constructionism. While quantitative research generally seeks to test hypotheses and either verify or reject models and theories, qualitative research is concerned with discovery and exploration. Further, social constructionism is primarily concerned with discovery of how meaning making occurs and how both the meaning that is made and the process of making it shape and inform lived experiences.

The current research was designed to support the testing of a larger question: namely, whether and, if so, how, principles and practices of narrative mediation can be applied to transform societies where people have distinctly differential lived experiences that are predictable and even determined based on one or more socially constructed identity categories. Much of the work done on this question of improving lived experiences up to now has operated within a positivist or structuralist understanding of identity. I traced some of that history in the description of my own journey in Chapters I and II. To approach the larger question, this current study presents two methods of dialogue and community engagement developed by the author to incorporate constructionist and narrative principles and practices derived from or informed by narrative mediation (Winslade & Monk, 2008) and narrative therapy (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Because the methodological choices for the project were not predetermined or based on other previously conducted research, or even based on a preconceived research methodology, they are best understood as a continuation of my *journey*. In keeping with the *journey* metaphor, the methodology discussion will also be presented in a somewhat narrative style.

4.2 The Research Questions

The questions that were of great interest to me in this study were

a. How can principles of narrative mediation and therapy be used effectively to reconceptualize a previously existing dialogue model that was based on positivist and structuralist principles?

b. How can narrative mediation principles and practices be adapted to a larger community context in a manner that supports a radically transformative community action agenda?

c. Can dialogue models be developed for use at the community level that are grounded in constructionism; infused with narrative mediation principles and practices; able to articulate and deconstruct dominant and alternative community narratives; and able to produce a novel and accessible community analysis that can serve as the basis for a radically transformative community action agenda?

d. Do such models (described in a, b, and c above), if developed, effectively contribute to either the deconstruction of conflict-saturated narratives; the decompression of compressed narratives; discursive position shifts; narrative identity repair; or the identification of increased openings for action or new lines of flight?

e. Is Foucault's conceptualization of power/ knowledge useful as a framework for analysis of community dynamics, particularly in communities with compressed and conflict-saturated narratives?

4.3 Justification of Methodology

Research is often designed in large measure on the researcher's underlying assumptions about what constitutes valid research and which methods support a particular mode of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This project did not follow that design sequence. As described in Chapter I, this effort is an initial step in my larger research agenda of living into a broader, more complex question: *Is it possible to develop a community engagement model using the practices and principles and following the trajectory of narrative mediation, that shift the experience of inequality when those inequities that have been structurally, systemically, and even violently reinforced and reproduced for multiple generations?* Having been personally involved for more than twenty-five years in different approaches to achieving racial equity and having been frustrated by many of those efforts, I came to

realize that most of those approaches were based on understandings of identity and community framed in positivist, essentialist, and structuralist philosophical stances. The methods developed here are in response to my awareness and adoption of a new philosophical stance.

In the past several years, there has been an emergence of what Margaret Wheatley (1999) calls a *New Science*. The *New Science* highlights a sense of perspective and the role of relationality. It includes conceptualizations such as chaos theory, quantum physics, social constructionism, and so on. There has been an increase in the areas of practice that are taking up New Science stances, including identity scholarship (Gergen K. J., 2009; 2009b; Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Butler, 1988; Smedley & Smedley, , 2005). Even as identity scholarship has moved towards a constructionist stance, community engagement practices of the past several decades have continued to operate from previous philosophies of positivism and structuralism. As the New Science emerges and specifically as social construction emerges as a primary philosophical stance for identity scholarship, it is appropriate to develop practices that incorporate constructionism. These new practices then become the scaffolding for continued constructionist theory development and exploration. This current research seeks to make a contribution to the scaffolding and practice development agenda of others like David Denborough and his colleagues at the Dulwich Centre Foundation (www.dulwichcentre.com.au/about). One of the primary contributions of this research is to advance the field of narrative practice through the introduction of two new engagement approaches specifically designed for multiparty conflicts and broad community applications.

Community engagement occurs in a variety of contexts and community engagement and dialogue methods have potential application in conjunction with many different strategies. As such, the *bricolagic* approach is most appropriate to the development of new methods. The bricolagic approach as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2005, pp. 5-8, 54-55) has many facets. In this regard, I understand my life's journey as having been that of a *bricoleur*. This study is also conducted in the form of *methodological and interpretive bricolage, and* the results are presented as *narrative bricolage* with an understanding of its potentially *political* dimensions (pp. 5, 7-8). There are multiple theoretical and practical methods drawn from for the first conversation, including focus groups, Freirian emancipatory dialogue, narrative

inquiry, and the granular communications model. Similarly, the method for the second conversation, which was not planned at the time of the first convening, was informed by narrative mediation, collective narrative practices, and restorative justice. The interpretive process I drew on in crafting the methods was informed by narrative inquiry, participatory action, and grounded theory. Moreover, my bent towards social justice led me to narrate the results in particular ways, and I am well aware that the results have a political dimension. This is all accounted for in the bricolagic approach to research. The theoretical basis for the *bricoles* used in the two dialogue sessions and in the bricoles used for analysis was presented in Chapter III and will not be restated here.

It is impossible to state that this approach was the *best* approach in this context. It is more reasonable to assert that the methods were appropriate in light of the research question. These methods were developed because other methods either did not exist or were not widely published and in use. They drew from my experience with community engagement and were informed by my developing understanding of social construction, the Foucauldian conceptualization of power/knowledge, and my experience with narrative mediation and therapy. Often a researcher justifies a methodology in response to a question about *appropriateness of fit* for the particular research subject. In this instance, the development of the methods is the research subject. I don't know whether the methods are applicable and *best* in other settings. I will offer a conjecture as part of the conclusion of this study and leave readers to assess whether these methods offer a good fit for other contexts. In the future, I hope there will be several constructionist approaches for collective engagement to choose from. At the moment, it is possible to say that the methods developed were at least one way to incorporate constructionist principles into dialogue process, introduce narrative mediation principles as a mechanism to ground a larger community engagement process, and to assess whether a Foucauldian power/ knowledge analysis is applicable and revelatory for a community like Greensboro. That was the impetus of my research, and these methods were appropriate in that regard.

The remainder of this chapter includes (a) a general statement of my approach to ethical considerations for engaging the community; (b) a step by step description of the research methodology for each conversation; (c) the modes of data collection;

(d) framework for data analysis; and (e) what data derived in this fashion might reveal or point to.

4.4 Ethics Considerations for Research Design

Whereas the methodological choices were developed in an iterative fashion responding to the community context as the engagement unfolded, ethical considerations were deliberated well before initiating a research agenda with the community. The initial unstructured interview process with my co-investigator (Mary Louise Frampton), described in Chapter I, had received approval from the human subjects review (IRB) process at University of California, Berkeley, where Frampton is on the law school faculty. In preparation for the specific portions of research that I intended to include in my thesis, I was comfortable getting extended permission from the University of California. I also wanted official approval directly from my home program. However, there is no formal human subjects review committee process for the Taos/Tilburg program. I, therefore, initially presented my proposed research design to my Taos/Tilburg advisor, John Winslade. As a faculty member at California State University at San Bernardino, he has substantial experience with ethics review and approval in his own university context. He is particularly familiar with concerns raised by narrative, constructionist, and action research protocols. After addressing his initial concerns, and on his advice, I sought out another Taos/Tilburg faculty member Saliha Bava for her assessment. Bava, among other things, teaches courses in performative research. She offered significant additional feedback that went beyond what was *proposed* as ethical to also identify ethical *behavioral markers (i.e., performance of ethics)* for community engagement. I modified the proposal in response to both Winslades and Bava's recommendations and approval. Because of Frampton's continuing involvement, we subsequently re-submitted an application for specific approval under the University of California at Berkeley's human subjects review process. Approval was granted.

To participate in this study, each participant executed a written informed consent form. The informed consent was in two parts. The first was an agreement to participate in the research. The second part was to allow video and audio recording. The participants were advised in advance of the gathering as part of the written invitation to participate what the intended uses were for the recording (research and not for video display or broadcast) and how the data would be stored. At the time of

the gathering during dinner, before the first participants transitioned from dinner to the library, there was an opportunity to raise any concerns and get answers to any questions regarding the research, data recording and storage, reporting out, and so forth. In the next section, I present a detailed description of the methods for each of the two dialogue models. After which I restate the rationale and justification for the models.

4.5 How/Who/What - The Beginning of Performing Greensboro

The journey that led to the identification of the play *Trouble in Mind* as a possible centerpiece for a dialogue process was described in Chapters I and II. Once the play was determined to be the centerpiece or, following Freire, *the code* for dialogue, the engagement model and method of incorporating the play into community dialogue were very loosely conceived. A paraphrased methods statement consisted of the following:

a. Identify the *right mix* of community voices.
b. Secure tickets for them to see the play (preferably all on the same night).
c. Have them agree to come to a dinner dialogue gathering the next night.
d. Facilitate a discussion of the play that might metaphorically represent Greensboro.

The specific facilitative structure of the conversation was developed after the process of engagement was already in motion. Each of the steps proposed above was accomplished in the following ways:

4.5.1 Participants - Identify the "Right Mix" of Community Voices

Frampton and I chose whom to invite to the dialogue from the many names that had emerged during the two rounds of interviews and others we had encountered in the community listening process. We had met many but not all of the people we invited; some were recommended or identified by others as having a unique perspective or important voice. The criteria applied for extending an invitation included

a. *Some level of community engagement* with the highest preference given to people who had previously demonstrated an interest, willingness, and capacity to engage across a number of socially constructed categories (i.e., *bridge builders*);

b. The composition of the entire group should be as much as possible a *reflection of the multi-racial, multi-ethnic, cross-class, and cross-sector demographic composition of the Greensboro community*;

c. *No elected officials* – We wanted to record the conversation. We believed that, even if we offered clear confidentiality guidelines, we could not shield politicians and public figures from possible repercussions associated with candid statements, wavering assertions, or thoughtfully nuanced positions in a dialogic process. Some of the first participants we invited also expressed a concern for the level of candor in conversations if funders and potential funders were involved so we ultimately chose not to invite program officers or executives of several local foundations.

d. *Heavy concentration of "next level" leaders* as opposed to those residents who currently held leadership positions, whether official or unofficial, for long periods; and

e. *Avoidance of caustic and polarizing figures*. For purposes of early *practice for dialogue*, we believed that it was important to create a *safe*, open environment. During interviews we had met some individuals so closely linked with difficult positions and longstanding conflicts that we concluded that their presence in the early phases of this project might detract from an atmosphere of dialogue and vulnerability.

We extended forty-five invitations to people who met all or most of the criteria. Thirty-six people accepted their invitations. A few who initially accepted did not attend. Thirty-two invitees attended the play; and twenty-eight people attended both the play on Thursday night and the dinner-dialogue the following evening. Of the twenty-eight participants, there were seventeen women and eleven men. Fourteen people identified as White, seven as Black, three Latino/Latina, three Jewish, Palestinian or Middle Eastern, and one South Asian. Seven participants were under the age of 35.

4.5.2 Venue for the gathering.

The dinner was convened in the gathering or fellowship hall and the dialogue session was held in the library of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church (HTEC) in downtown Greensboro (see: http://www.holy-trinity.com/). HTEC had been identified by many of the people we interviewed as a regular gathering place for a broad cross-section of the community. HTEC is known as an ideologically progressive, inclusive, and non-doctrinaire community with strong commitments and connections to all

segments of Greensboro. It demonstrates its commitments and ideology through a variety of community service programs (ministries) for the disabled, seniors, homeless, under- and unemployed, people transitioning out of prison, people living with HIV or AIDS, and youth. The church also hosts regular community meetings for Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous, the justice seeker and immigration rights advocacy network, a regional quilting circle, a local business owners' service association (Rotary), several citywide book club groups, and other regular and special community events.

In addition to its ideological inclusiveness, the physical location of Holy Trinity is geographically central to the entire community; it is located on a well-known thoroughfare with extensive, free, well-lit parking and is accessible with regard to mobility issues of all sorts. It has on-site catering with a chef and service staff capable of accommodating dietary restrictions including vegetarian, vegan, and kosher options. There was also ample space to allow both our dinner and dialogue to occur in quiet areas of the facility separate from other activity co-occurring elsewhere in the church.

4.5.2.1 Preparing the venue.

HTEC dining hall is large enough to seat one hundred fifty people. In order to create a sense of intimacy or closeness with only 35 participants (the set up occurred before the participants arrived, based on the number of positive responses and not the actual number of participants), we moved several tables and a corresponding number of chairs (six per table) closer together and created a physical enclosure by placing potted plants in the room to create a sense of separation from the rest of the dining space. Even though there were no other people in the dining hall and no competing activities in the area, the intention was to create a sense of closeness.

In preparation for the dialogue in the library, we placed easel pads, screens, and backdrops for lighting to obscure any obviously Christian iconography without draping over it so as not to offend either our host or any participants strongly identified with or against those symbols. The library was well-lit, and the facilitator had pre-arranged lounge chairs, sofas, and upholstered seats in a circle.

4.5.3 Conversation I.

The theoretical and methodological support for the various *bricoles* of the narratively modified focused conversation has been described in Chapter III. The implementation of the method proceeded in this manner:

The flow of the Friday evening following the play was approximately

5:30 – 6:10	gathering and dinner;
6:10- 6:20	summarize the nature of the research and clarify and collect informed consent forms;
6:20- 6:30	conduct the icebreaker activity;
6:30- 6:40	refresh, break, transition to dialogue space; and
6:45- 9:00	dialogue and closure.

4.5.3.1 Communication guidelines.

Before starting the icebreaker, I passed out sheets with a few guidelines for the conversation time together. I asked for volunteers to read them aloud in any order they would like. They were specifically instructed to read aloud one that "either appeals to you or that you think will be challenging for you." without identifying why they chose that particular guideline. These guidelines were a loose restatement of the "covenant of presence" developed by Palmer (2010) for his Circles of Trust ® engagement model and are attached as Appendix A.

4.5.3.2 Icebreaker --purpose and design.

My intention throughout this process was to introduce a number of theories, concepts, practices, and principles without using a lecture or workshop to actually do so. Two central constructionist ideas, "meaning is formed in relationships," and the "multi-relationality" of being (Gergen K. J., 2009a), presented in Chapter II, were embedded in the icebreaker. The introductory activity also served to transition people from familiar forms of self-initiated and unstructured conversation over the meal to the more structured and facilitated conversational pattern to be employed in the dialogue portion of the evening. The specific activity was borrowed with express permission and modified in consultation with John Winslade from Winslade and Monk (2008, p. 106).

After a review of the communications guidelines, I read the prompting questions one at a time. Participants were invited to consider their response, first for themselves and then share in a small group format (at their dinner tables which

seated five[24]). The activity acts as a way of heightening the sense of a relationality of being and calling to mind their own multiple identities. The reflection times were kept intentionally brief (<30 seconds per prompt) to reduce self- editing.

The prompting questions were presented in the following order:

- What cultural identity do you belong to when you are asked to milk a cow?
- Who are you when crossing the Mexican-American border?
- What identity are you aware of when you see a Muslim praying?
- What aspect of your identity are you most aware of when you see a young man on the side of the road stopped by the police?
- What aspect of your identity were you most aware of when you *entered the theatre* to see the play?
- What cultural identity did you belong to when you *left the play*?
- What cultural identity are you most aware of *at this very moment*?

After sharing responses to each of these identity prompts with the other participants at their respective tables, participants were invited to spend no more than five minutes refreshing their drinks (coffee, tea, wine, or water) and dessert, and taking any necessary biological breaks (bathroom, smoking, or stretching) before moving next door from the dining area into the library.

4.5.3.3 Behind the dialogue.

The focused conversation model, described in Chapter III, informed the flow of the dialogue. I reshaped the questioning to reflect my emerging *model of granular communications*. This reconceptualization and the theoretical support are also presented at Chapter III. Two primary goals of the focused conversation model are to (a) slow down the reflexive and often unconscious connection between observation and decision-making and (2) to make an individual aware of the various components that go into the process moving them from thought to action. Specifically, focused conversations serve to separate observation from feeling, feeling from interpretation, and interpretation from decisions. As described above in Chapter III, the presuppositions that undergird ICA's model that do not align with a social constructionist or postmodern view were modified to infuse the process with constructionist principles.

[24] There were six seats at each table, and we asked during dinner that only five people sit at each table. This was offered as a visible reminder that there is a "voice" not present in the conversations.

I shifted the focus of the questioning to explicitly incorporate stories. Instead of asking participants to describe *feelings* arising from specific observations (the process of an ICA focused conversation), I asked them to share *a story* from their own experience (either a story they had lived or one that had been passed on to them) that helped to shed light on how they made meaning of the particular observation.

4.5.3.4 The dialogue.

Below are the questions presented to the participants in the dialogue focus group process and the rhythm for collecting their answers:

Question 1: *What were your general thoughts about the play?*

This first question was presented to the entire group with no expected order for response. Participants offered responses *popcorn* style. The next three questions were presented in *round robin* fashion, beginning with the first person who wished to share and moving around the circle clockwise until everyone who wanted to share had an opportunity to respond. After each question, I established a rhythm of approximately 90 seconds for individual reflection and jotting notes on index cards before participants were invited to speak into the group. After each answer we initially created a rhythm of about five to seven seconds of silence before the next person would speak. In listening to the audio recordings after the sessions, I recognize that the pause in between speakers was not maintained after approximately twenty minutes of conversation.

> ***Question 1****: Which scene, sights, or sounds in the play stood out for you?*
>
> ***Question 2:*** *Were there specific words, gestures, facial expressions, or exchanges between actors or any other observations you made that were particularly meaningful to you? Don't share the meaning you made, just the observation itself.*
>
> ***Question 3:*** *Thinking about the observation that stood out for you, tell a story, either from your own life or a story that you are personally familiar with that helps explain how you gave meaning to that observation.*

The following three questions were also presented to the group for *popcorn* styled responses where participants could answer in no specific order; there was no expectation that everyone would respond, although there was time in the process for

all who chose to respond. All three questions were asked one at a time with time for reflection (about two minutes) between questions. Participants then gave their answers to all three questions in one telling or turn.

> ***Question 4:*** *Did you notice whether you viewed the play from a particular perspective? For instance, was there one character that you aligned with more than others or were put off by more than others?*
>
> ***Question 5:*** *What was it about that specific character that drew your attention? Or if not a character, why did you adopt a specific perspective?*
>
> ***Question 6:*** *What do you "know" about that character that was not presented in the play?*

Responses to this set of questions led to a series of exchanges described in chapter V; they began to uncover how people fill in the narrative of other people's lives based on the narrative streams of their own lives and their discursively created assumptions about those in other categories. Several rounds of questions exhausted the time we had asked participants to set aside for the evening, and so we moved to closure.

4.5.3.5 Closure.

As we reached the time we had committed for the evening (3 hours), I noticed that there seemed to be much more that participants wanted to talk about. I offered to create an opportunity to continue the dialogue if they were interested. A last round of the circle invited participants to share one (brief) reflection about the evening, and I thanked them for their time and thoughtfulness. Several participants lingered to share additional thoughts. Others sent emails with reflections from the evening. That sharing helped shape the next session.

In their responses to the first conversation, most participants agreed there would be value in a second conversation. We agreed to a date approximately six weeks after the first session. The next session was held on a Thursday night instead of Friday to encourage the participation of Jewish and Muslim community members who possibly had religious conflicts during the first gathering. Although there were two Jewish and one Muslim participants in the first meeting, this was identified as a possible explanation for the absence of a few others that had been invited. It was not foreseen in the planning stage and not identified before the meeting by any of those we interviewed or invited as creating a barrier to participation. However, in an

abundance of caution and to offer full consideration to this possibility, the timing for the next session was scheduled in an effort to minimize this as a barrier to inclusion.

4.5.4 Conversation II - narrative restorative community conferencing.

For the second dialogue session, the venue, invitation process, and participants were roughly the same. Natural events (weather) and political events (an unfolding local police surveillance scandal) disrupted the ability or willingness of some to participate. However, the second session was also convened and facilitated in a manner that introduced an innovative practice incorporating narrative principles into community engagement processes. Again the *bricoles* of restorative justice, narrative mediation, collective narrative practice and Foucauldian power/knowledge analysis were described in Chapter III.

4.5.4.1 Venue.

The venue and physical arrangements for second gathering were the same as the first: Holy Trinity Church fellowship hall and library with the same set up for dinner and conversation. The same methods were used for recording and transcribing conversation.

4.5.4.2 Participants.

Invitations were extended by e-mail to all who had been invited to the first conversation, regardless of whether they had been able to participate in the first conversation and regardless of whether they had attended the play. In addition, invitations were extended to three colleagues of one of the first conversation participants who had heard reports and asked to be included in the next round. By Monday, the week of the event, thirty-four people indicated their intention to attend.

4.5.4.3 Life intervenes

4.5.4.3i <u>*Weather*</u>: On the evening of the gathering, news reports of a possible weather event (freezing rain moving into the area during the evening) led four people who had previously responded positively to call or e-mail to say they were opting not to come.

4.5.4.3ii <u>*Local Police Surveillance Scandal*</u> On the day before the second session, a local, community-focused newspaper, The *Yes! Weekly*, published an expose with a front-page banner headline entitled: "*Under Surveillance: How Greensboro Police Monitor Activists*" (Ginsburg, 2013). The article presented a series of assertions about activities of the Greensboro police force. The police were

accused of employing infiltrators, undercover agents, and paid informants to monitor groups described as having "progressive agendas." These groups included Occupy! Greensboro, The Beloved Community Roundtable, another group that supports Latino and immigrant communities, and other popular groups and programs. Among the people alleged to have served as a paid police informant was a member of the City Council who had been considered to be aligned with and supportive of progressive causes.

This exposé caused significant disruption in relationships within the community and led some participants to actively question whether either I or my co-investigator was aligned with the police or the more conservative factions of the city council. Despite assurances that we were not, a few who had previously agreed to participate either rescinded their acceptance or did not show up, presumably in response to safety or confidentiality concerns raised by the exposé.

Notwithstanding these disruptions, the session was convened as planned and twenty-two participants came. While the group was smaller, the diversity was maintained. Of the twenty-two participants, four were Black, one was Latina, one was Jewish and Middle Eastern, one was South Asian, and the other fifteen were White. Five were under the age of 35. Thirteen participants were women, and nine were men.

4.5.4.4 Session II.

The flow of the dinner/dialogue for the evening of the second session was approximately

5:30 – 6:30	Gathering and Dinner
6:30- 6:50:	Introductions, Recap of First Conversation, and Description of Process for the Evening.
6:50- 7:30:	"Practice" Narrative Conferencing by Mapping *Trouble in Mind*
7:30- 8:50:	Collective Narrative Conferencing Re: Greensboro
8:50- 9:10:	Wrap Up, Closure

The following is a detailed description of each activity:

4.5.4.4 i Gathering.

While there was plenty of time for gathering and dinner, we slightly delayed starting the actual conversation to make allowance for possible increased travel time

and delayed arrival due to inclement weather. During dinner, I secured signed informed consent forms from three new participants and reconfirmed consent to record from all other participants.

In the final ten minutes of the gathering time, while all of the participants were still seated in the dining/fellowship hall, I showed a DVD of two brief segments (approximately four minutes each) of the play *Trouble in Mind*. The Triad Stage staff had provided the clips in response to our request for a video copy of the entire play. The clips were not the segments I would have chosen by preference, yet they allowed the play to be re-experienced in a way that did not influence the dialogue by emphasizing the portions of the play that I thought were significant.

4.5.4.4ii Introductions, recap, and description of process for the evening.

Introduction – To initiate the conversation I acknowledged a few new participants and that not everyone might remember all the names from the previous session. Participants were asked to introduce themselves, and if they wanted to say something about either their work or community involvement, to do so in "one breath or less."

Recap of First Conversation – In preparation for the second conversation, I reminded participants of the process used in the first conversation. I described the method as a modification of Parker Palmer's *third thing* methodology. In this approach we "set a third thing down in the room between us," and instead of speaking directly to each other's stories, we each connected our stories to the "third thing," "Not you, not me, but a third thing to speak about." I also summarized the responses and feedback from the first conversation, including the assertion by some in the room and some not present that it would be helpful to "move towards some action."

Description of process for the evening – I next explained that, as a way of moving towards action, we would attempt in session II to "name the problematic where action might best serve the intentions and the hoped for future of the community". The flow of the evening was to first practice our analysis method by discussing the play, and then to analyze the circumstances of Greensboro. The play would be used as practice for understanding the type of questions and the flow of the process. The next two blocks of time consisted of the same naming and mapping

process, first using the play as an example of the process and practice for the second application of the process when the participants would directly consider Greensboro.

4.5.4.4iii Practice narrative conferencing by mapping Trouble in Mind.

As participants took seats around the circle, I had passed out 3 x 5 inch index cards and ink pens. I began the conferencing process with an assertion fully in the tradition of Michael White (2000, 2007; White & Epston, 1990) and other narrative therapists (Monk & Winslade, 2013):

"The person is not the problem. The problem is the problem."

Then, drawing from Winslade and Williams (2012) and referenced again by Monk and Winslade (2013), I wrote on top of a sheet of white easel pad paper the words: "*The problem is the problem*" and then drew a large circle in the middle of the paper. Next, I invited the participants to reflect first for themselves for approximately 90 seconds and write responses on their index cards in response to the following question:

With regard to the situation presented in the play, how would you name a primary or significant problem or problematic?

After a brief period of reflection and making notes, participants were invited to share in a popcorn fashion. As participants shared their responses, I asked clarifying questions to help name the problem, name it succinctly, or, in some cases, name the problem in such a way that it was not identified as an embodied part of a particular person or type or group of people, but instead as a problem that the person or group of people was acting in response to.

As participants shared, I sought to encircle the problem and map its effects. When someone identified a source problem (in a way that I recognized as speaking to the source of the problem), I wrote the description in the middle of the circle. If they described an action that someone took in response to a problem or a result of a problem, I wrote that on one of the lines drawn perpendicular to the circle (the spokes). This process will be described in more detail in Chapter V.

This recording process inherently, even if subtly, infuses the researcher's framing of issues into the participants' efforts to name their own context. Exercising the facilitator's discretion to determine whether an idea as expressed fits the category of problem or result necessarily affects subsequent presentation, hearing, and understanding and also influences the shape of any future action agenda. At times, in

order to minimize the facilitator's prerogative to categorize what was offered, I would inquire of the speaker: "*Is that a problem or the result of or response to a problem?"*

After several participants had shared their individual framing of a problematic in the play and their comments had been recorded, I recapped what had been shared up to that point and invited participants to continue. This process continued for about 15 minutes after which I fully re-stated all the comments that had been recorded.

I explained that if we had more time and if the play itself represented the actual problem situation that we wanted to shift, we would create an opportunity for deeper and more extended story sharing about these effects. We would also map a next level to show how, if at all, these same problems were affecting the actors and director in their life beyond their work with the theatre. To move to the next phase of the analysis practice, I offered this as a transition statement:

> *This description of the problematic is often what gets viewers' attention, and yet it is certainly not all that is happening in the performance. Are there examples you can point to where the problematic might still be present, and either it isn't controlling, or people make a choice to relate differently to it?*

Pointing to a few specific examples on the easel pad where the participants' naming of the problematic had been recorded, I asked, *"Were there examples where, for instance, 'pain' or 'ignorance' or 'fear about loss of money' was present, and someone chose to act in ways other than what would be predicted if that problematic was controlling?"* The participants reflected briefly while I drew a new circle on a clean piece of easel paper. The participants then named several scenes, words, actions, or occasions in which they thought this was the case. The process for recording the scenes was also informed by the description of the Winslade-Williams approach for reverse mapping (2012). As participants named the various scenes, I wrote a shortened statement of the scene on a spoke that came to the circle. After several scenes had been named, I asked, "*What do you think made it possible for the actors to act in this way?"* For each specific instance that had been named, I tried to name the specific actors who had been involved in that scene and asked, "*What was it that allowed (Will Etta or Henry or the Director or the younger actress) to act this way in spite of the presence of…* (naming what they had offered earlier for the problematic)?"

After a period of approximately 45 minutes of naming, mapping, identifying alternative stories, and reverse mapping, I offered a summary of what participants had said and then described how and why the rest of a process would be shaped, if we were to follow it out. We then shifted our focus to analyzing the problematic of Greensboro following a similar pattern we had used for the play. To make the transition, I offered the following bridging comment:

> *But talking about the play was just for practice… Now that we know the process, let us consider the process of naming the problematic for Greensboro …*
> *If you were asked to name a significant problematic for Greensboro, how would you name it?*

4.5.5 Narrative restorative community conferencing re: Greensboro

Naming and mapping the problematic. In order to encourage a period of private reflection and writing on index cards, I stepped into the foyer of the fellowship hall to refresh my coffee. On two occasions I signaled a request for silence of people who had finished writing and had begun talking with those seated next to them. The mapping process for direct reflection on Greensboro then followed the same process as described above for *Trouble in Mind:* I started with a clean sheet of easel paper. On the top I wrote, "The Problem Is the Problem," and then I drew a circle in the center of the page. At this point I invited *a naming of the problematic* in terms that would not identify the problem as part of the essential nature of any one person or category of people. Focusing on Greensboro seemed to pose more of a challenge for participants than the play had. After spending approximately 20 minutes naming and clarifying descriptions of the problematic, I asked for examples to help map the conflict:

> *Participant XY, you named XYZ (fear, apathy, isolation and so on) as a problematic of Greensboro. Can you give an example of what happens when XYZ is present? What are resulting behaviors or consequences?*

I recorded the responses on the spokes outside the circle and created opportunities for others to map that same problem, possibly identifying different effects. "*Similarly, what do others see as results of this one particular problematic?"* All responses were captured on the same sheet of easel paper. At several points in the

mapping process, in an effort to encourage continued creativity, I restated what had been said, and also asked, *"What else? How else could we describe a significant problematic of Greensboro, and what does that problematic produce?"* After several new examples of the problematic and the mapping of their effects, I summarized the narrative of Greensboro developed to that point by recapping all of the problematic descriptions and how they are manifest in community patterns, practices, structures, and personal interactions.

Reverse Mapping /Unveiling Unique Outcomes – In transition language similar to what I had used in the first example, I invited the participants to begin identifying hidden or less frequently considered streams of Greensboro's narratives.

> *Just based on who is in the room, I am certain that this description of problematics is not a complete statement of the narrative of Greensboro. What are some examples that you are aware of taking place in Greensboro where the presence of the problematic is not a good predictor or explanation for people's actions or relationships?"*

The responses to the next set of prompts began the reverse mapping process. Starting again with an empty sheet of easel paper, I drew a circle in the middle and a few spokes leading to the circle. I then asked for examples of when the problematics did not seem to control actions or structure relationships. As participants named examples, I wrote a shortened statement of their example on one of the several spokes. Next, I asked, *"What was present that allowed these actions, behaviors, or circumstances to come about, even when the other narrative is very present?"* I wrote the qualities and conditions that participants named inside the circle. In the same manner as the summary of the statement of the problematic, I summarized and restated the characteristics of an alternative narrative that exists and is not often highlighted in Greensboro.

Identifying Alternatives and Choosing a *Preferred* Narrative – To approach the next point of inquiry, I described Greensboro as having at least two narrative strands:

> *One that I would call the 'dominant' narrative of Greensboro, which includes [a re-statement of the mapped problematic stating both the problematics and some of the actions and responses to the problematic] and the other can be described by [a restatement of the unique outcomes*

and nonconforming portions of the narrative]. Does that sound about right?

Then I posed the following question*:*

If you had the opportunity to choose between these two narratives, do you have a preference for which story you would want to be the primary or predominant narrative and lived experience of Greensboro?

I explained the next steps of an ideal process:

If we had a full spectrum of voices to fill out the narrative maps even more than we have done today, we would spend time learning what actions and commitments participants could make to give structure to the alternative and preferred narrative. How could you act in the preferred narrative until it would be at least as well known and lived as the narrative that was, or at least was perceived to be, the dominant lived experience for many people in the room?

4.5.6 Closure and wrap up.

There was one final go-around the circle in response to the question

Is there anything that would be important for you to say at this point for you to feel that your time was best used or honored?

I then thanked the participants for their time, committed to returning to share the results, and discuss what, if any, next steps they might be interested in taking. At this point, while the larger participatory action project would continue, my work introducing both narrative and performative theory and constructionist principles into the community engagement process was completed. The initiation of a narrative mediation trajectory had been sufficiently established.

This is not to suggest that the project itself ended. Rather, this was the point at which I moved from data collection into a pure participatory action process that was imagined in the original convening. The two processes that I introduced and am evaluating served a bridge into participatory action. This group continued to meet. At the time of the reporting of these findings they had continued to meet on a periodic basis – approximately every 4-6 weeks – for more than twelve months at the time of this writing. The group used the experience of the methods reported in this study to craft a model of community engagement that the called the "Greensboro Counter

Stories Project." At the time of this writing, they were seeking funding and community support to implement a model to address one of the major experiences that divides communities along racial and ethnic and class lines – the relationship to the public safety apparatus of Greensboro and Guilford County to its residents and visitors.

4.6. Summary of Methods

This step-by-step description of each facilitative activity may allow the reader to make an initial assessment about whether the process has integrity and how it might align with a particular epistemological or philosophical framing. For those who would like to use the method, I have provided a clear sense of the specific actions and resources that I used as a starting place for the readers' own process. The method was bricolagic in the sense that it was an emergent construction (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 7) and directly responsive to the conditions and context of the community. It was also bricolagic in the sense that the materials, especially the play, were locally sourced.

The first dialogic method – narratively modified focused conversations – used the play *Trouble in Mind* as a Freirian code. Freirian emancipatory discourse is particularly suited to community problem analysis. The model used was even more well-suited than typical Freirian approaches in the sense that the inquiry was based in narrative principles and the focused approach allowed participants to become more aware of how personal and cultural narratives and discursive and recursive themes were shaping their meaning-making process.

The second dialogic method – narrative restorative community conferencing – was also an *appropriate fit* for the research questions. This approach was shaped using narrative mediation principles, informed by Butler's conceptualization of performativity and the emergence of the granular communications model. It also was conducted in a way that was not divisive with an eye towards the type of narratively-framed reconciliation process that Cobb (2013, p. 270) indicates is needed to decompress the compressed and conflict-saturated narratives that are the central feature of the dominant narrative of Greensboro. The model invited a wide-ranging dialogue that produced a thick description and analysis of multi-generational harms that are difficult to approach through the traditional restorative justice framing. At the same time, it maintained a focus on addressing harm and not simply punishing

or shaming. Finally, the combined use of the two dialogue models presented a social constructionist framing without requiring the participants to learn about construction, discourse, performativity, and so forth. It might well be that just introducing this different philosophical stance on individual and relational identity and community construction is sufficient, following Deleuze, to open lines of flight that support radical transformation (Winslade, 2009). The content produced by these dialogue models should give sufficient indication of the utility of this approach for applying narrative mediation, deconstructing oppressive narratives; producing a valuable power/knowledge analysis; and opening new options for action at the individual and community level. To understand how the data was derived and analyzed, the next two sections describe the data collection and coding methods and the framework for analysis followed by a consideration of the studies' significance and limitations.

4.7 Data Collection

The conversations were audio and video recorded by a recent Guilford College graduate who was a professional sound engineer and who also participated in the dialogue sessions. Three separate video cameras were place in corners of the room outside the circle and pointed in crossing patterns such that every angle of the room and each participant in the circle were always simultaneously in view of two cameras. There were also two field microphone recording systems placed inconspicuously in the circle. One was placed on the floor under the center table; the other was placed on the end table next to the couch where the facilitator sat. The sound engineer was able to attend to all the cameras by changing the tapes during the natural break and transition points. The field recorders had six to eight hours of continuous recording capacity and once started did not need to be attended to during either session.

The audio and video recordings were copied onto multiple DVDs, placed in the primary investigator's drop box account, and stored on an external hard drive formatted for Apple MAC equipment. The clearest recordings were sent out to a professional transcription service. Working from strictly audio recordings, the transcription service made an effort to transcribe every audible utterance including coughs, laughs, cross talk, and verbal hesitations. For purposes of this analysis, I removed most of those audible utterances from the final transcript used for the present analysis. I was not conducting the form of close conversational analysis that

would be informed by those features. The primary challenges for transcriptionists seemed to be the presence of multiple voices, varying accents, various volume levels, and the participants' use of local, regional, and ethnic idioms. The transcriptionists also did not have the benefit of seeing the play. There were several references made to the play itself that registered as unintelligible for the transcriptionist. [This was an instant reminder of the social construction of meaning and also granular communication. The utterance by itself without a shared referent was rendered unintelligible and the transcriptionist did not have an independent narrative stream within which to locate the observation and could not offer any meaning for it]. After receiving the transcripts from the transcription service, I had the benefit of three different angles of video recordings to track the speakers. Using the variety of data sources at my disposal, I clarified or corrected the transcripts to the extent possible. Even with the various sources, there were a few utterances that were unintelligible and that I could not recreate from within the conversational context. I also chose to eliminate from the transcript many of the hesitation utterances such as "umm", "like", "you know", "and so", "well", and so on. I made my best judgment in an effort to retain the utterances when they contributed to context, clarity, and emphasis, and eliminate those that would render the transcript less readable.

4.8 Coding

Using the Foucauldian (1980; 1982; 1994) power/knowledge framework, I highlighted the transcript for each comment and exchange where one aspect of power and relations of power was referenced by the participants. I cross-referenced places in the transcript where the form of inquiry and resulting conversation reflected one of several stages of granular communications or Butler's conceptualization of performativity. Finally, I considered the entire transcript and coded for evidence of the nine hallmarks of narrative mediation or the recognition or openings for action of lines of flight.

4.9 Data Analysis

I analyzed the data in two domains – method development and content production. With regard to the development of the methods, the process was assessed using Turnbull's (2002) eight-stage process for social constructionist theory building. What I offer are models of engagement. The models, however, are designed in support of testing the larger question and possibly future grounded theory

approaches to community dialogue. Although conducted in an intuitive fashion, it is important to notice whether my intuitive approach approximated a more theoretically pure model for theory building. The places of divergence might be places for readers to look for future process refinement. I also assessed the internal consistency of the methods and considered where if at all the processes displayed any of the nine hallmarks of narrative mediation (Winslade & Monk, 2008).

The second domain of analysis is the content. It is important when considering the utility of a newly developed method to make an initial assessment of the data generated in terms of its usefulness for furthering the community's expressed social justice agenda. I operate in the belief that community transformation happens in the spaces of residents having an expanded sense of agency, the circumstances being perceived without the air of inevitability and immutability, and knowing where to use leverage to accomplish the desired changes. Building these change spaces would require narrative identity repair, narrative decompression, and an effective power analysis, respectively. In the analysis of the content I conducted a thorough Foucauldian power/knowledge analysis and also looked for indications of the building of counter stories or, following Cobb (2013), better-formed stories and dissensus (p. 234).

4.10 Importance and Limitations of this Study

This study contributes to the development of a variety of dialogue methods that can be used to engage communities and organizations with a particular constructionist framing. Other approaches used for communities and organizations that adopt a constructionist stance like Appreciative Inquiry are not intended as mechanism for conflict dissolution (Denborough, 2010). Once a set of methods has been identified, then the larger questions of the applicability of narrative mediation can begin to be tested. These methods in combination with other explicitly performance based approaches can form the foundation for a transformational workshop experience.

The study is limited in four notable ways: First, certain groups of potential participants were intentionally excluded from the dialogues. This was a strategic decision to begin a process that has a history of divisiveness and failure. For a full implementation, all sectors of the community would have to have equal impact in order to get the thickest and richest possible description. Second, the two dialogue

sessions were constructed piecemeal, so it was not possible to get full commitment and describe the full engagement process at the beginning. The original request was for only one evening of dialogue. The participants requested a continuation. In a full implementation of a process, it would be helpful to identify for the participants the full extent of the time involved. Although all continuing participation was as voluntary as was the first session, there is the mild sense of discomfort and inconvenience created by each additional convening. Third, partly in relationship to the second limitation, there was not sufficient time to allow for the story sharing that would enliven and enrich the later discussions. As the processes were unfolding – and as I became more aware of the operation of granular communication – I became more aware of opportunities for deeper story sharing. The time of convenings was not allotted to build in time for deeper story sharing and processing. If the entire process was designed at the outset, as suggested by the second limitation, it would have been more possible to establish the full measure of time required to build in story sharing. This is a shortcoming that the group in fact addressed in their subsequent design of the Greensboro Counter Stories project. Fourth, an awareness of Foucault, Butler, and granular communications theory at the outset could have made the facilitation even more focused**.** As I have indicated at several previous points, this process was developmental. A fuller advanced understanding of some of the theoretical underpinnings for the analysis might have allowed me to frame questions differently. However, it is also possible that a more thorough understanding of those theories could have created more possibilities for interference and subtle manipulations of the process.

4.12 Summation of Chapter

In this chapter I have presented the models of dialogic engagement I developed to support my engagement in the Greensboro (NC) community. These methods were developed in an iterative and intuitive fashion as a bridge from an assessment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, for which I was a co-investigator, to a larger and extended participatory action agenda, the progress and results of which are beyond the scope of this thesis. The measures of success for these methods will be in whether they were successful in establishing a potential platform for community transformation on constructionist principles. To incorporate constructionist principles, I relied primarily on principles developed out of the

narrative turn in social construction. The methods therefore incorporate the narrative mediation theories and practices of Monk and Winslade, certain principles for collective narrative practice as articulated by David Denborough, and the conceptualizations of narrative identity repair (Nelson, 2001), and narrative decompression (Cobb, 2013).

I was actively involved in an approximately 18 month community listening project in which my co-investigator and I were evaluating the effects of the Greensboro (NC) Truth and Reconciliation Commission (GTRC) on the lived experiences of residents related to racial equality and community participation. During that 18 month period, we essentially conducted a community listening campaign in which we interviewed more than 130 individuals, convened several small group discussions, and attended many naturally occurring public gatherings. Based on our early findings of the listening project, we decided to shift from an investigation of the effects of the GTRC process to give consideration to a possible participatory action research effort. The methods being described and evaluated in this thesis were conducted as the bridging activities between the GTRC investigation and the participatory action efforts.

This qualitative investigation was conducted over a period of eight weeks. A group of twenty-eight Greensboro residents representing a broad demographic spectrum in terms of race, age, professional and education status, and years of residency and who were actively involved in some aspect of community improvement were invited to participate in a dialogue process. The dialogue process centered around most of the participants attending a production of *Trouble in Mind*, a play by Alice Childress performed at the Triad Stage in downtown Greensboro. The evening after the play, participants convened for dinner and dialogue using a Narratively Modified Focus Conversation model for the discussion. A second convening of the group occurred approximately six weeks later, and again the group gathered for dinner and a continued conversation employing a Narrative Restorative Community Conferencing model for dialogue. The two dialogue models presented and evaluated in this study would best be characterized in their construction and design as *bricolage* in which components of focus group method, participatory action research, and narrative inquiry were incorporated.

The two conversations were audio- and video-recorded by a professional videographer and sound engineer. The recordings were transcribed originally by a professional transcription service and then clarified to account for transcribers' difficulty with multiple voices, multiple accents, and southern and local idioms.

The main point of inquiry is to present the two dialogue models – narratively modified focused conversation and narrative restorative community conferencing – as process innovations developed for this context and applicable in other similarly characterized community engagement efforts. The two processes are analyzed in Chapters V and VI for their capacity to introduce a social constructionist framing and a narrative mediation trajectory into a community transformation agenda. The process was also assessed using a model of theory building. Ultimately, it was important for the process and results to occur to community members as organic, authentic, democratic, and revelatory. I offer some assessments as to each of these qualities as well.

The content of the conversations is analyzed in Chapter VII using a Foucauldian power analysis. An analysis of the content is also conducted to assess whether the methods accomplished any measure of narrative decompression (Cobb, 2013) or initiated the building of effective counterstories (Nelson, 2001). The larger participatory action research program to which this investigation was the bridge continued for 12 months afterwards and was still continuing at the time of the writing.

4.13 Transition to Next Section

Chapters I, II, and III have described my personal, theoretical, epistemological, and practical journeys to the central question of this study. Chapter IV described the methods I used to approach this question. The next section evaluates the quality of the methods and the quality of the content produced by the methods. Chapters V and VI assess the methods from a process and theory building perspective, and Chapter VII analyzes the content produced in those conversations. Finally, Chapter VIII presents a brief statement of my preliminary conclusions as well as potential research and practice implications going forth.

Section II – Introduction to Process Analysis

Section I of the dissertation was introductory. Chapter I offered an introduction to my personal journey, and Chapters II and III were introduction to the theoretical, philosophical, and methodological foundations informing this work. Chapter IV described the actual methods used. Section II is comprised of three chapters of analysis: Chapters V and VI provide detailed descriptions and analysis of the facilitation processes for each of the two group conversations; and Chapter VII presents an analysis of the content of those conversations. In Chapter V, I analyze the narratively modified focused conversation model. This model was designed as a focus group using a traditional approach to Freirian emancipatory dialogue – the problem-posing theatre – as a basis for participatory action research. The focus group was then facilitated in a flow informed by the Focused Conversation model of the Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA), but that model was reconceived from a constructionist stance to incorporate narrative inquiry and the granular communications framework presented in Chapter III.

Chapter VI presents the second method - narrative restorative conferencing – which is a hybrid form that borrows insights from of the narrative conferencing process being experimented within certain school settings by Winslade and Monk (2008). The process also considers some of the principles of collective narrative practice developed by Denborough et al., at the Dulwich Center (www.dulwichcentre.com.au). The narrative restorative community conferencing model pays homage to restorative justice principles but is primarily facilitated using the practices and insights offered in narrative mediation and therapy. My overall approach is fluid and responsive to the context because, unlike school settings and typical restorative justice processes, there is not a specific instance of law or rule breaking as the initiating occurrence for the conference (Zehr, 2002). In this context, we are having a conversation that describes both the historical and present moments as ongoing sources of harm and seeking to transform the relations of power that perpetuate harm. The harms occur in the context of a dominating and compressed master narrative for the community, so this process begins to identify those narratives.

Finally, in Chapter VII, I offer one analytical frame for the content. I am particularly interested in community conversations that establish a basis for radical,

socially just community change work. Therefore, I analyzed the content produced in the conversations employing Foucault's (1980; 1994) framing of the role of relations of power in constructing identities and shaping and maintaining lived experiences. I also incorporated Butler's (1997) conceptualization of performativity and subjectivity. If community conditions and responses to those conditions are shaped by relationships of power embedded in various discourses and if discourse and performative responses to those discourses create the inner and relational subjectivity that animates the lived experience in community, then an effective community change approach should unveil the power relations and allow participants to investigate their performativity in ways that point to new options for action. In Chapter VII, I offer an assessment as to how effectively the processes described in Chapters V and VI accomplished that task.

CHAPTER V Narratively Modified Focused Conversation

My focus in this process was to add to the available methods that advance narrative approaches to community engagement. The method was designed to incorporate social constructionist principles in ways that allow community participants to analyze their circumstances with clarity and attention to the factors creating and stabilizing their condition. That level, I propose, is the level of discourse and the repetitive co-action that is both produced by and reproductive of discourse. Discourse is transmitted in narrative and so, in attending to the community narratives, three simultaneous actions occur that support radical community transformation: 1) acknowledgement and affirmation of the lived experiences of members of a community divided across socially constructed categories – in this instance, race; 2) a collective narration of a dominant community narrative with an of unveiling of its effects on individuals and relationships and its expression in and through institutional forces community; and 3) exposing the weakness of dominant narratives – and by extension the discourses they transmit – by identifying lack of coherence, the edges of their explanatory capacities, and examples of where the dominant narrative fails to either determine or predict outcomes and effects.

As described in Chapter III, the primary models of community engagement concerning race up to this point have been based in positivist and structuralist philosophies. The four approaches identified – policy/structural analysis, improved cross-boundary relationships, improved understanding through dialogue, or personal awareness and reflection - have not proven sufficiently comprehensive nor have they resulted in substantial shifts in lived experience. The paradox is that often the efforts themselves have been immensely successful at the task on which they focused: relationships have improved, people have become more aware, many structural changes have been implemented – I think here of civil rights litigation and legislation and Great Society programs – and yet the overall lived experience is too often continued marginalization and unevenly experienced possibility horizons. To accomplish the desired radical transformation, the focus of the efforts is misplaced. It might even be that the efforts did not succeed because they could focus only on the directions that essentialism and structuralism offered.

My intention is to diverge from those approaches by incorporating constructionist and, more specifically, narrative and performative principles as the basis for analysis and action. The poststructuralist or constructionist philosophy, and especially the narrative and performative turns in them, offer greater possibility for making the change we seek. Because these principles are still evolving there is a need for continuing development of methods by which to introduce the philosophical stance to communities in ways that support the communities' action agenda. Paradoxically, it might be in departing from earlier approaches to addressing socially constructed divisions that those approaches can ultimately be redeemed. It is possible that in the same way in this study I have reconceptualized approaches to incorporate constructionist principles into the focused conversation method, other models may also be reconceptualized using the same constructionist philosophical stance in ways that benefit from the practical approaches that have been developed over many years.

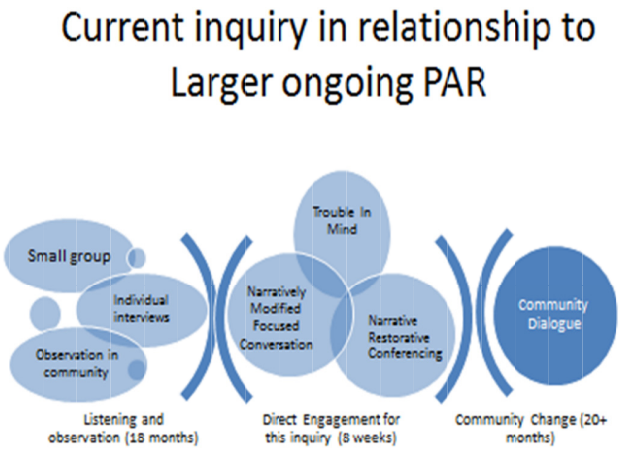


Figure V-1 Flow of overall community engagement experience

While the two conversations are the primary focus of analysis, the conversations themselves were not the beginning of the engagement process. As represented in Fig. V - 1 above, there were four activities that preceded the first conversation. Although I have to imagine that each activity contributed to the process, these activities were not evaluated for this thesis.

A. The Individual Interviews and community listening process involving more than 130 people over a period of eighteen months.

B. *TROUBLE IN MIND* – the first activity of the engagement that specifically related to this study included watching the play – *Trouble in Mind*– written by Alice Childress and presented by the Triad Stage Theatre Company. The play is described more fully in Chapter III– Methodology.

C. *DINNER*: The evening after many of the participants watched the play, the facilitators, conveners, and participants gathered for dinner and conversation. The logistical details of the dinner and dialogue are also presented in detail in Chapter IV.

D. *ICEBREAKER* – The first conversation had two primary components. First, there were *ice breaker* questions with brief table discussion at the dinner tables and then the full group sat in circle in the library for the focused conversation.

5.0.1 The Icebreaker: Who are you when…?

The icebreaker exchanges happened at several small dinner tables seating 4-6 people each. Responses were not recorded in audio, video, or written form. It is, therefore, not possible to gauge any effects this activity might have on the larger conversation. The icebreakers were, however, intended to play a valuable part in the overall experience. Even without being able to provide an analysis of any impact the ice breakers might have had, it is still important for the reader to know what was involved.

The icebreaker questions were directly drawn from or informed by Winslade and Monk's (2008) positioning activity and intended to create a sense of playfulness as well as imbalance at the beginning of the dialogue process. By inviting quick responses to atypical points of inquiry, the participants would hopefully begin to get a sense that the conversation was also going to be atypical. The specific questions posed for the icebreaker were

- What cultural identity do you belong to when you are asked to *milk a cow?*
- Who are you when *crossing the Mexican-American border*?
- What identity are you aware of when you *see a Muslim praying*?
- What aspect of your identity were you most aware of when you *entered the theatre* to see the play?
- What cultural identity did you belong to when you *left the play*?

- What cultural identity are you most aware of *at this very moment*?

Responses to one prompt were shared around the table before the next prompt was given, so no one could respond to one in anticipation of the next. If participants had wished to project a particular image of themselves to the group, they would have been much more able to do so with advanced notice of all of the prompts. The intention of the exercise was to get people noticing with one another the different perspectives that might occur in any shared situation. No data from this sharing was captured: I did not record the conversation, nor did I move from table to table listening to comments. It was only through laughter or other verbal reactions that I could infer appreciation for the activity. I encouraged participants to share quickly without analyzing each other's thoughts. In many situations, the first speaker sets both the tone and appropriate scope for what can be shared (Cobb, 2013, p. 72). To avoid the *problem of the first voice*, participants were asked to write their answers down very quickly before sharing. With written answers, it was more likely that they would share from their first thought without seeking to align their ideas with (or reject) the ideas of the first speaker.

After the icebreaker activity, we moved into the library area for the narratively modified focused conversation.

5.1 Overall Flow of the Facilitated Processes

At each stage of the engagement I focused on accomplishing three tasks: 1) to introduce social constructionist principles, performative metaphors, and narrative practices into the earliest phase of a participatory community action process; 2) to establish constructionism, performance and performativity, and narrative metaphors as the foundation for any future community action of the group; and, 3) to present a unique analytical model and experience to a collective of people who in various ways had long been engaged in the work of building just communities and improving racial relationships. It was important that the analytical approach and results be clearly distinct from previous approaches in order to create initial momentum – or at least a curiosity – for pursuing what might be possible from the new approach.

5.2 Theory of Change

The approach I adopted reflected a specific theory of change that guides my work. That theory includes the following tenets:

a) Discursive factors establish, reproduce, and sustain the conditions of community – both those deemed favorable and those deemed hurtful to those seeking change.
b) Any process leading to transformative shifts in the lived experiences of communities divided across a socially constructed category will require attention to such discursive forces.
c) Transformation begins when people become aware of how they are positioned by various discourses and then presented with possibilities for shifting positions.
d) Discourse cannot be shifted in a single conversation or even in a few limited conversations.
e) Yet, shifts in discursive position can occur after a few conversations.
f) Shifts in a limited number of discursive positionings will begin to shift a larger set of community narratives and metaphors that characterize the dominant community narratives.
g) Position shifts are accompanied by an increased sense of agency (i.e., greater range of performative possibilities); increased sense of agency will be experienced as a positive change in overall lived experience.
h) People first narrate their current lived experience, and then, if properly facilitated, they might articulate a preferred narrative.
i) The articulation of a preferred narrative presents openings for action by identifying opportunities to change the structures and relational patterns that do not conform to or support the newly articulated preferred narrative.
j) The narration of the lived experience and the narration of the preferred narrative have performative elements.
k) Preparing to reorder systems and performances in ways that support a preferred narrative will require a comprehensive action agenda and a compelling alternative narrative(s) grounded in the counterstories of resistance and emergence.
l) In order to construct a compelling analysis and establish the foundation for a comprehensive action agenda, the conversational process must slow down the reflexive thinking and acting processes to a pace that will
    1. Give participants a sense of how their perspective and positioning related to and shaped by particular discourses influence both their analysis and their perceived range of options;

2. Allow for an analysis of power and other factors influencing their lived experience; and
3. Use the participants' own analysis to gain a clear sense of where they might have more and different openings for individual and collective action than they had previously recognized.

No single aspect of this theory of change is new. What seems important in this is the combined emphasis on narrative, performativity and the principles of granular communication. It is this combination that guides both facilitation practice and the interpretive approach.

The remainder of this chapter has three movements. First, I describe in close detail my actions as facilitator for the narratively modified focused conversation process. Secondly, I briefly relate those actions to the social constructionist principles underlying narrative mediation practices and to the overall goal of developing a new model of community engagement – the more in-depth discussion having occurred in Chapter III. Thirdly, I identify the type of data that this process would generate in support of a community change effort and offer a set of qualitative measures by which the effectiveness of the method might be assessed.

5.3 Conversation I - Narratively Modified Focused Conversation

5.3.1 Introductions.

The group conversation began with a round of introductions. My original request was for "names only, no affiliations." Participants immediately questioned and subsequently overruled this request. They wanted standard introductions with names, titles, organizational affiliations, and type of work. The compromise we agreed to rather quickly was that participants would introduce themselves giving names and, if an individual wanted to, offering an organizational affiliation, but no description of work, resume, titles, or history.

5.3.1.1 Rationale.

The proposed approach to the introductions was designed to give as little basis as possible for discursive positioning that is reflexively offered and taken up when people are aware of information, such as another person's title and experience (Tan & Moghaddam, 1995). Often an unconscious hierarchy is established based on people's affiliations and history, which can influence whether and, if so, how and how much, people will assert their own perspectives. Such positioning always takes place

within the context of a specific moral order of speaking (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré & Van Langenhove, 1992). I wanted to avoid creating this hierarchy as much as possible. On the other hand, I was interested in creating an environment in which participants felt a sense of ownership for the conversation they were having. Allowing them to establish parameters for engagement different from what I had originally proposed was probably as important as limiting the potential shifting of the conversation based on the subtleties of discursive positioning that title and organizational affiliations create.

Although there is a distinction between social roles and discursive positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990), the danger still exists that the static position of a social role will influence how listeners hear each other in conversation. Winslade and Monk (2008) and Cobb (2013) highlight the importance of how positioning is established by a therapist, counselor, teacher, or mediator within the introductory remarks that open a session as well as at various times throughout the interaction. The same types of positioning dynamics are likely to occur within introductions to a group dialogue session. Therefore, a facilitator's approach to introductions should also be made with awareness of the possibility for such positioning and try to minimize it and its effects.

The form of introduction I requested reflected an effort to avoid the introduction of privilege, position, and relations of power into the conversation at the earliest stages. Aspects of position and privilege inevitably occur in conversations where people share personal information. They will be based on perceived relative status, hierarchy, and relative interpersonal value within a particular community context. Values are assigned by proxy to different performative and aesthetic aspects of a person's identity as well. The aesthetics that people associate with race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and culture, especially in conjunction with the performative aspects of speech and dialogue (such as conversational etiquette, vocabulary, articulation, accents, emotional performances, use of gesturing, and so on) influence whether and how people receive another's communication effort (Austin, 1975) (*see also Chapter III - granular communications*). In in-person and face-to-face exchanges, these assessments, which are contextual and socially constructed, are almost entirely reflexive. With regard to how identities are established, Cobb (2013) citing Jabri (1996) states that

> Identity always implies positionality and difference … Identity is constructed through a social process involving subjective representation and intersubjective recognition … it is always multiple and varied … There are always social positions emerging through a multiplicity of locations and reflecting different modes of representation. (p. 151)

Butler (1997) also notes that such introductory remarks and information sharing could begin to set up power-based relatedness when she describes the roles that power plays in establishing identities.

> We are used to thinking of power as what presses on the subject from the outside, as what subordinates, sets underneath and relegates to a lower order. This is surely a fair description of part of what power does. But if, following Foucault, we understand power as *forming* the subject as well, as providing the very condition of its existence and the trajectory of its desires, then power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence and what we harbor and preserve in the beings that we are. (p. 2)

Cobb, following Jabri, connects the formation of identity with the extent of agency that a person experiences. In order to provide a space for the greatest possible experience of agency, I sought to avoid the sharing of some information that is reflexively used to establish and determine hierarchy of contribution value in community dialogue. Following Butler's approach to subjection, when individuals introduce themselves with categorical descriptions of themselves, like title and occupation, they also are implicitly accepting, acknowledging, and embodying the positions embedded in whatever discourse they operate in vis-à-vis the categories that they identify themselves as being a member of in relationship to the other categories assumed by and assigned to other participants.

For instance, consider the possible positioning effects of the first few introductions:

[People conversing in background]

> ***Facilitator****: That was really helpful. But I recognized that it will be helpful for us to do is just one time go around, I cannot assume that everybody knows the names of everybody who's in here. And so we don't need to do any kind of affiliation or association. Just names for now would be wonderful. And so I'm* ***Female Speaker # 1****: [indiscernible] [0:04:18].*

***Facilitator**: **Female Speaker # 1**, speak up a little bit, I would imagine.*

***Female Speaker # 1**: **Female Speaker # 1**!*

[laughter]

***Facilitator**: So we are also sort of doing the sound check. As we're doing names, we're doing the sound check to see the level of projection that is required for everyone to be able to hear everybody else. So if you're not hearing someone, you just give identification. That would help. So -*

***Female Speaker #4**: Can I ask a quick question? Is there a reason why you don't want affiliations? Because I'm so curious about* **where** *people are* – {emphasis reflects speaker's emphasis}

***Facilitator**: Well I don't actually mind affiliations but I don't necessarily want to start down the path, because usually affiliations open the long trail of descriptions about work, and awards and all that stuff. I really want to be sure to avoid that. So if we could do name and just affiliations in a breath. That would be really helpful.*

***Female Speaker #4**: Okay.*

***Female Speaker #2** I'm Director of the Center for New North Carolinians at UNCG.*

***Female Speaker #3**: Female Speaker #3, I'm nobody, just Female Speaker #3*

***Facilitator**: You've got to speak up. Remember we're recording, so you have to speak up.*

***Female Speaker #3**: Female Speaker #3 that's enough for one breath*

***Facilitator**: And I would assume that if I had to take an extra breath …*

[group laughter]

***Facilitator**: you would tell us you were at …*

***Male Speaker # 1**: Uh, Lamar Gibson.*

***Female Speaker #4**: Female Speaker #4, Guilford College.*

***Male Speaker # 1**: Male Speaker # 2, I guess I am the sole employee of "odd Jobs by Male Speaker # 1.*

[group laughter].

***Female Speaker # 5**: Female Speaker # 5, Pastor of the Congregational United Church of Christ.*

In this exchange, several speakers positioned themselves in terms of their organizational role or title, which implied prominence and authority. In contrast, female speaker three, a prominent grassroots activist for residents of public housing,

positioned herself in a subordinate position. Reflexively, in my role as facilitator and probably with the reflexes of a 30 year mediator, I sought to place her in equal positioning by offering information that I was aware of that she had neither offered to the group or authorized me to offer. One approach to narrative analysis is to considered "how" an idea is narrated and not just the content of what is said (Riessman, 1993). A full narrative analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis, but as an example of the type of information such an analysis might yield, it was telling that Female Speaker #3 introduced herself in a soft, at time inaudible tone. This could be interpreted as performing reservation, hesitation or some performative aspect of positionality. The potential for minimizing certain voices in the conversation reinforced for me the appropriateness of the approach that I had hoped to take. The proposed format for introductions sought to avoid or minimize this dynamic at the outset of the conversation. However, the participants had different desires for a more standard form introduction. We just kept it moving without drawing too much undue attention to this feature of the conversation's design.

5.4 Dialogue

After introductions, the conversation opened with a description of the first stage of the narratively modified focused conversation (NMFC) process and its rationale.

> ***Facilitator**: Thank you all. What I am actually hoping to do is that we're going to have a conversation process. We're going to have a conversation that's going to feel a little awkward. I just want to set that out up front. And part of the reason we're having a conversation that is going to feel a little awkward is that what I'm trying to do is slow down our process, which is almost, in many ways, quite un-American. There is a way in which we have an observation about something, and very quickly we decide how we're going to react to it. But in between the observation and the decision a lot happens: first, there's some observation that we have; then there's some story or some aspect of who we are, our history or something that we connect to the observation--it's the story that informs the feelings that we're having about it, or the meaning that we're making; and then we use all that to decide.*
>
> *And usually when we're talking about difficult subjects, nobody takes the time to slow down enough to be able to check to see where, if at all, people might be missing one another. If we're not even starting with*

> *the same observations, then the different observation gets mixed in with the interpretation and the meaning making and all that, and then the two of you will start from such different places that you may not ever really land on a meaningful conversation. So I'm inviting us actually to have a conversation about a really important and challenging set of issues presented in the play and in the community, but to do it in a way that might feel a little awkward because we're going to slow down the stages of talking. Is that okay? And part of this will also be because there are enough of us and we' re trying to get through at least a couple of stages, so I'm going to invite us to do things that are fairly short, like we won't get a chance to do full recitation of historical experiences and stuff like that. We're going to do more short snippets than full stories, all right? Thanks.*

This was a brief, nontechnical introduction to the narratively modified focused conversation model. The process itself and the rationale to support my narrative modifications were presented in Chapter III. As also described in Chapter III, ICA's focused conversation method and the questions that ensue from the method are based on presuppositions that reflect a representational theory of communication. That is to say that the individual speaker has an essential self and a reality that their words represent. In contrast to this approach, a constructionist stance posits that communication is performative and recursive (Austin, 1975; Bruner, 1986; Butler, 1997; Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and that meaning is made co-actively (Gergen K. J., 2009) and contextually (Burr, 2003). In acknowledgement of the multi-relationality of being, the granular communications theory briefly presented in Chapter III supposes that much of the context in which a communication occurs is not visible. Communication, in this instance, is not only in response to present conditions but also to other conversations the speaker has previously been involved in and can anticipate in future.

An ORID-elicited observation would allow two people to make the same observation and then express a range of emotions related to that observation. The narratively modified focused conversation goes further by allowing the two observers and others in the audience to notice how the same observation placed in multiple life narrative streams has the effect of increasing agency and repositioning the observer. The two observations that follow allow two different individuals to place the same observation within different narrative streams, yielding very different bases for their

meaning making. In these two examples, two participants, with distinctly different demographic and professional profiles, both *align* with the same character in the play. Yet, as they each describe the basis for their alignment, they related the alignment to portions of their own personal narrative that could be interpreted as being almost diametrically opposed. A more intensely granularized process would have invited each of them to identify multiple streams of their own or notice how the one stream they have chosen positions and subjects them to a certain way of being.

In the ORID method, a facilitator would ask participants first to make an observation and then to identify the emotive context associated with that observation. This simple act obscures the power of discourse and limits the participant's capacity to weaken the discursive effects by changing their position in relationship to that discourse. Inside a singular narrative stream, the metaphors and language by which that observation is interpreted will create a range of what is deemed appropriate emotional content, range of meanings and thereby shape the possible landscape for action. If, on the other hand, a participant can notice that there are multiple possible narratives that yield different contexts for the observation, the narrator might also notice that differing emotional performances and interpretive frameworks are possible. The increased range of performative responses also stands as an invitation for the participant to choose the narrative stream and performative possibility that extends the greatest sense of agency.

5.4.1 The prompt.

***Facilitator**: All right. So I want to invite you all to do something. Can you identify which among the characters in the play you most closely align with? Like, if you were trying to understand your own life story or you were making a connection to challenges or the way that your life is structured or whatever, who among the characters in the play, if any, did you align with?*

5.4.1.1 Exchange #1.

***Male Speaker 3**: What do you mean by "align?"*

***Facilitator**: Or connect to or relate to, have some level or kind of connection to their story. Is that clearer?*

***Male Speaker 3**: That really doesn't answer my question, but I'm a White guy so I got to - I'm very comfortably aligned with the White director, whatever his name is. And I saw myself when he went to the*

back room – when I was challenged like he was, splitting in the scene, going directing things happening from behind the closed door. I mean that's an alignment, I guess.

5.4.1.2 Exchange #2.

Male Speaker 9: [in response to the same prompt] *I had difficulty in understanding the protagonist, to be the protagonist because the other storylines were as strong as hers, and so it was unique. I mean if I was to sit back and look at something from a vantage point that I usually don't get to look at. And so I realized, this is my moment. What was interesting to me about what you're saying, though, is that most of us grew up. If you went to the theater as a kid, let's say it was a western – like a John Wayne movie – I wanted to be the hero, right? Well actually no. I'm not the cowboy hero. Was he going to look like me? And if I'm looking at the theater back in the 50s and 60s, I'm looking at everyone, and you don't see anybody that looks like me, you know. So when we started to talk about how do you connect or align with characters, we are always trying to do that. They say when you look at a group photograph the first one you look for is yourself: how do I look? Well, if you're in a photograph, but you don't see yourself, you develop other lines of analysis, and you're always checking out other things to see how those things are relative to you, because that gives you a sense of position. I can triangulate if I know who he is and she is, and what not, and I create this meeting, you know, so that I can function. And that's what it is. I came into this community as an outsider, and I'm looking around because I want to see who am I in this picture? Because I'm in other places when people said you don't belong in this picture. But you could be acting up, starting things up. This is not your movie or your play. And that's what I was thinking about when you asked that earlier question about that moment and what character do you align with, I was like, 'Oh, that's an interesting question'. For me at times, I could identify with the director. Yeah, I've been stepped on and beat up and taken advantage of and then he says 'that's the way of the world'. I said, 'Well, yeah, it is. I can relate to that. I know what that's about.' You know? White or not, gay or not gay, I know what that's about. And I think other Black folks do, too.*

5.4.1.3 Analysis.

In both of these examples, the participants *aligned* with the director character in the play. However, as they each described their points of alignment, they emphasized very different aspects of the same character. Male Speaker #3 identified the director as someone operating from a position of power, and he says, "I could see myself acting the same way to reinforce my power in relationships." On the other hand, Male Speaker #9 identified with some aspects of the director character's backstory, which was not spoken in the play but assumed at least by this one observer. For Male Speaker #9, his identified point of alignment was with the director's experience of being "stepped on, put down, and marginalized." These two observations come from two participants who have observed the same occurrence (the director), and yet the narrative stream that they respectively place the director's character in results in distinctly different interpretations and significance assigned to otherwise shared observations: one sees the director's behaviors reflecting his position of power while the other interprets those same behaviors as performative illustrations of the director's status as a marginalized individual.

Whitehead (2008) observes the importance of multiple narratives and implies the values of intentionally choosing from between them:

> Two people can react to the same idea, opinion, or data in opposite ways, and the reasons for this are often ideological, which means that people have very different stories for how to interpret the world. Our preferred stories about how things work always have a political aspect that comes from our social class, upbringings and tell the stories that we have absorbed from our past. The stories we tell as truth are told for an audience, to position ourselves within our social context to maximize our opportunities and resources. In that respect our only difference from the alpha-male of the wolf pack is our greater range of narratives from which to choose. (p. 8)

"This is the same as saying that we construct stories to explain the world and use the explanations (stories) to quickly make predictions about the world and guide our behavior" (Mehl-Madrona, 2010, p. 168). It seems that in addition to meaning making, the narrative stream through which an individual views a character shapes the range of reasonable expectations that that observer had for the character (a form of positioning); it also informed the appropriate range of feelings that each observer

could have about the character. Another speaker commenting on the behavior of the director highlighted this point even more forcefully:

> ***Male Speaker 4:*** *I think I understood you earlier when you asked about alignment. I think that happened to me a few times. I found myself wanting the director to say certain words that would have exposed more of his humanity, or the way that I hope would have* [indiscernible] [0:11:06] *my complexity of the situation. So for example, I find myself frustrated with the director because there was a time I wished to God that there was a different script, because at times he had some charisma, some ability to give windows of what human beings really feel. And sometimes most of the helpful exercises that he gave to help people - I wouldn't say transcend race and culture - but to find their shared values, what it means to be human. That's what I love about the theater. And his vulnerable moments, I was really hoping that he would tell us who are you, what drives you, really? But I was wanting him to say, "I was abused as a child," or "I'm a gay man," or something to get to some of the deeper parts, to have him become empathetic to the other people that have gone on stage, to find some shared values. I was just - I got to one area where I was disappointed with the writer and with the character, and - does that kind of get at what you were asking?*
>
> ***Facilitator:*** *It could be.*
>
> ***Male Speaker 4:*** *And that sort of, it changed for me that I, um, I no longer thought myself able to connect to the director.*

The choice of narrative stream in the cases of Male Speakers #3 and #9 actually coincided with the observation, actually made the observation possible and informed what exactly was being observed. This, in turn, created a corridor of available meanings and appropriate feelings to be made and had. In other instances like for Male Speaker #4, the desire to interpret within a particular narrative stream created dissatisfaction. There was empathy available within a particular narrative stream (what would have been an acceptable, even empathetic, performance for someone, if their script included a plot of being abused or gay) while a different range of emotions was available outside that narrative stream.

The practice of identifying alignment with particular characters in a play demonstrates how observers use their own personal narrative history to establish a background and basis for interpreting the performance of others. This activity could in future be investigated even further to give participants a clearer sense of how

meaning making operates. A more intentional inquiry process might ascertain whether participants share my interpretation or understand the practice in a different way.

5.4.2 Personal narratives serve as foundation for observations.

Stories, according to Cobb (1994; 2013), following Chatman (1978), contain plots, character roles, and themes. Inside these components are established the performative parameters. Certain characters, positioned in the story in relationship to other characters, can take certain actions, feel certain ways, perform those emotions certain ways and hope for or expect certain outcomes. Plots and themes also set out a "natural" sequence of actions, a range of possible choices for acting, and even imply the ways that plot twists can occur (Cobb, 1994). To reinforce the conceptualization of narrative streams as containing this range of emotions, meanings, and actions, I further reconceived the ICA focused conversation/ORID process by replacing the **R**eflection (feeling) and **I**nterpretation (meaning-making) stages of the focused conversation process with a question about personal historical narratives.

> ***Facilitator****: All right. Thank you. I'm going to ask you to do something that is really – it's often hard. I was talking to* [my co-investigator] *about it, and she kept saying, "It's not what people do. It's just not what people do! Why are you asking this?" And yet I think this is important, so I'm going to ask you anyway. I'd like for you to think back on an observation, something that happened in the play that stood out for you. And this is what I'm inviting you to do: just say what the things were, either words or a gesture, or a movement, or whatever the observation was, but not the* ***meaning*** *that you made about it. Don't tell me what their intentions were when they did it, whatever they did. I just want you to describe your observation. What was the word or the movement, or the gesture, or the prop on stage or whatever? And what I'm going to invite you then to do, actually just spend a minute thinking about this, an observation. And then think of a story from your own history that in some way connects to that observation and helps you make meaning of it.*
>
> ***Female Speaker 5****: A story, that you want us* ***to share****?*
>
> [group laughter]
>
> ***Female Speaker 5****: I'm just saying…*
>
> [more group laughter]

> ***Facilitator****: I welcome it, if you have one that you were able to or willing to share that would be great. And I understand certainly if you see the story or you know, you connect with it, and you're like "Okay, I got a story, but I'm not trying to share <u>that</u> story"! Remember our communication guidelines, "It's never share or die"! So first the observation, were there words? Was there a movement or a gesture or something? And then a story from your own experience – not something you heard in history, but your own story that in some way connects to what informs or makes meaning of that observation.*

Two exchanges in response to this prompt demonstrate this modification's force with regard to understanding the role of narrative in the shaping of emotion and meaning making. These exchanges were also evaluated by the two speakers as being remarkably *revealing* and they had not expected to "go that deep" in this conversation. For one speaker it was refreshing, for the other quite disconcerting; so much so that this could explain her "work conflict" for the next session.

5.4.2.1 ***Exchange # 1.***

> ***Female Speaker 5:*** *Oh, I got one.*
> ***Facilitator:*** *Yeah.*
> ***Female Speaker 5****: So the observation was seeing the clothes, noticing the way the women dressed when they came to the theatre every day, the attire that the women characters wore, particularly what the African American women in the play wore. That's the observation.*
> ***Facilitator****: Um-hum.*
> ***Female Speaker 5****: The story or the experience is, and this is just I think three or four years ago, so it's pretty recent. My mother told me about it. I had an aunt, my mother's sister, who is very ill in the hospital. And they didn't know what was wrong. You know--lots of doctors, lots of tests. They're not really sure what was going on. And so my mother told me that she and all of her other sisters, who lived across the state in Virginia, dressed up in their finest attire to go to the hospital to show them that she matters. You know [the way they dressed said,] "We are to be respected!" So that's the story that I think about when I see the women dressed up to come to the theatre for rehearsal.*

[Near the end of the rehearsal of this story, the narrator's voice 'cracked' as though the performance might be accompanied with tears or crying. This telling was

followed by an extended silence (possibly a full 60 – 90 seconds) among all the other participants].

5.4.2.2 Analysis.

The original ICA-styled focused conversation process presupposes "feelings" or "emotions" as naturally occurring internal states that derive naturally from independent observations and provide information "as accurate and real as the initial observations." (The Canadian Institute for Cultural Affairs, 2000, p. 24). In some social constructionist framings, emotions and feelings are socially derived, relationally appropriate performances (Gergen K. J., 2009; Butler, 1997; Burr, 2003). The basis for the feelings can often be located by having a person identify the narrative stream(s) or story(ies) that informs how she or he interprets an observation. In a standard ORID model, feelings are treated as real information, even as naturally occurring, leaving little room for shifting, investigating, or challenging them. You could imagine someone operating from this perspective on the sanctity of emotional information saying, "My feelings come from a *real place inside of me*, and I am allowed to have my feelings." In this modified dialogue process, by locating the source of the feelings in a narrative stream, the narrative will point towards the various discourses and cultural narratives within which the observation is situated and consider other narratives from the same speaker's experience which might allow for its possible deconstruction and reconsideration.

The typical questions at the reflective level are questions, such as "whether they liked it" ("it" referring to the observation), "what angers" them, or "what frustrated" them; or when they were "surprised or delighted" (The Canadian Institute for Cultural Affairs, 2000, p. 27). Even questions like, "What other experience do you associate with this?" do not seek to unveil the discursive forces that shape or the narrative streams that contain the meaning making possibilities; rather, those inquiries just lend a sense of *reality* to the emotional content without investigating their socially constructed nature or which discourse the feelings are produced by or are reproducing. In the narratively modified focused conversations model, the **R**eflections and **I**nterpretations sections of the ORID/method, which typically invite descriptions of feelings I and meaning making **(I**) are replaced with questions seeking to identify the variety of personal narratives that offer meaning to a particular observation. Those narrative streams can then be investigated to unveil the

emotional, interpretive, and agentic constraints embedded in the narrative emplotment.

The intention of this chapter is to consider the method itself and specifically the process modifications, to discover whether, and if so how, the process could be valuable in responding to the needs of communities that have experienced multigenerational division along a socially constructed line. It is outside of this chapter's scope to analyze the content of the speech fully, other than to notice what emerged from this form of prompt that would have been hidden from a typical ORID process.

An analysis of the content of the brief exchange offered above might notice that the speaker's sharing is founded on a particular historical discourse of African Americans, and possibly poor people, and how, in relation to major societal institutions, like hospitals, the relationships were characterized by an objectification of the body of women of color and the correlative disrespect, disregard, or mistreatment. It might also notice from the same exchange that the observation was made inside a narrative of the history of deep mistrust that many African Americans of a certain generation have for the medical establishment and the discourse of medical mistreatment of African Americans under the guise of research. In support of this observation, I would reference for instance, the Tuskegee syphilis experiments[25], the Cincinnati radiation trials[26], and the many abuses experienced in the name of psychiatric research and treatment.[27] This process of identifying the narrative stream and analyzing the discourses present in it unveils certain often unknowable or otherwise invisible or unstated perspectives, such as when mildly humorous aspects of the play – like the women's outfits – were in fact being interpreted through one viewer's lens of historical pain and struggle.

This same exchange reinforces Judith Butler's idea about the work of power and subjectivity. The story from which the observation is made tells of a group of people who were reacting to their own seemingly externally projected and internally

[25] Tuskegee experiment http://www.tuskegee.edu/about_us/centers_of_excellence/bioethics_center/about_the_usphs_syphilis_study.aspx

[26] More can be learned about the Cincinnati radiation experiments at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_radiation_experiments

[27] Vanessa Jackson, MSW describes the history of abuse of African Americans under the rubric of mental health treatment. http://academic.udayton.edu/health/01status/mental01.htm

appropriated struggle against meaninglessness, and how a specific performance, in this case clothing, was an example of how aesthetic forms can and most often do convey meaning in the performative of struggle. The emotional content, meanings of, and appropriate responses to the observation of the clothing that the African American women wore in the play are clearly informed by the experiential context of the speaker and would be different for each observer.

A metaphor that is particularly relevant in continuing to unpack the referenced text from above is Nelson's (2001) conceptualization of "narrative tissue." The idea is that multiple connected narratives intertwine, contributing to a person's sense of identity. The metaphor of connective tissue is significant, in light of the hospital example, because the ability to shift away from or transform a particular sense of self is especially needed where an identity seems to limit the experience of agency. To do so may require unveiling and shifting discursive positions that are not independently established but rather are formed at the intersection of several narratives themselves produced in different spheres, maintained through multiple different relationships, and having differing benefits to the person or group in different social settings or institutional arrangements.

In a typical ORID model Reflection/Feeling phase, in response to an "R" question about emotions or feelings connected with a particular observation, the types of *feeling* words that might have been offered are words like *anger*, *humor*, *knowing*, *frustration*, or *delight*. In the ORID model, the facilitator would have likely received these descriptions as both *appropriate* and *real*. However, the pronouncement of one or more of the above emotions in response to a specific observation would not allow for an analysis of power or other factors influencing participants' lived experience, nor would it give participants a sense of how their positioning in relation to a given discourse influences their analysis and response to specific situations. Without the narrative stream to situate the origin of the feelings, the *appropriateness* would be left to be established in the context and understanding of the researcher or interpreter or facilitator or translator. Comparing the depth and richness of this type of sharing to a response to being asked to *identify a feeling*, it is clear that the granular communication and narrative approach presents more possibilities for making connections to future actions.

Further, the performance – even the mode of expression – of a particular emotion or feeling would be shaped in that moment in relationship to those in the conversation. The speaker is speaking to multiple audiences, some present, some virtual, at the same time and often involving the same speech in several different conversations. A participant's choice of emotional descriptions would thus be influenced by their discursive positioning in relationship to the multiple audiences, not just the other participants who are present at the moment. By describing the interpretive context of the observation in terms of a personal narrative from a time that is seemingly disconnected from the present moment, it should be more possible (although still not completely) to make visible an interpretive context.

Often, in dialogue, we hear a person speaking, and it sounds like the equivalent of one unified note. If we listen carefully with a deconstructive ear, we might notice that we are, in fact, hearing a complex chord that is so well rehearsed that it possesses the presentation quality of a singular note. Under the construction of the notes, we might realize that every note carries several sound qualities of significance. I explore this metaphor a little further in the Epilogue.

5.4.3 Exchange # 2.

The following exchange further demonstrates the power of connecting observation to narrative streams, specifically in terms of achieving a thick description of the community or richness and nuances of the person (i.e., moving from representational and referential towards relational exchanges). This information and opportunity for exchange would be lost if observers relied only on a contained expression of an *emotion* to relate the experience of their observations; and an engagement model based upon a positivist or structuralist stance would not have a theoretical basis from which to inquire to elicit this information.

> ***Facilitator****: … observation, and then a story that you connect it to?*
>
> ***Female Speaker 8****: I can relate to [previous speaker]. I've had many moments of such in-your-face clarity. But when he [the director] threw that trash on the floor and it was just like, Pow! In the gut! You know? I mean I was just angry. But then we figured out where he's going with it. I have -*
>
> ***Facilitator****: What was the story that you connected to that observation? And how did it get you to be "angry?' What was the story that you connected to that?*

> ***Female Speaker 8****: Well, I have four children. We were talking earlier about how different approaches on different children is needed, and I have one child that I have the hardest time understanding, and his motivations for things sometimes make me perplexed and angry. There's one night when we were watching a movie and they couldn't behave, and I said, "That's it. Go to bed". And I wanted to see the end of it. And he turned off the TV. And I said, "Why did you do that?" I was just going to see the end of it, and he unplugged it. And then he went down the hall. And I'm so angry. I was just like, "What? Why would you do that? That was just so rude!" And it was just back-and-forth with this child. I don't understand what, and he was crying, and I was you know. And at the end, he said, "Mom, it was scary and I had a nightmare after I saw it." And his motivation was completely opposite. I just thought he was being mean to me and not, you know, that it was just to show me something different. And it was just a real terrifying moment and helped me understand that child in a way that I could never connect with him before. And now when we have those moments, I slow down and just truly listen, and he's the one that needs that, he's the one I want to understand, and he's the one that I got to peel away the layers in order to get, because it's beautiful when you get to know him, and it's not always easy or straightforward.*

5.4.3.1 Analysis.

This example shares many features with the first example in terms of the missed opportunity to nuance, to unveil the sources of emotions and to open up multiple interpretive possibilities when the inquiry does not interrogate narrative and discourse. This example is also a case where there are multiple audiences, multiple contexts and varying discursive positions from which the speaker is speaking. However, there is another subtle aspect to this particular sharing that is made visible through the process of connecting to the narrative stream.

Typical feeling words (anger, frustration, confusion and so on) sparked by this observation in an ORID inquiry might have left the interpreter or facilitator with a specific impression of how to understand the observation. What the narrative stream clarified was that the speaker interpreted her anger through a narrative connected to discourses on parenting and compassion – specifically mothering, possibly about adequacy, competency, loss of control, or even other cultural dimensions of family and a cultural narrative that establishes expectations for mother's relatedness with

their children. A dimension of this narrative points to deep empathy with people who do things that make others angry. The speaker's narrative also gives insight into how her experience of conflict was transformed through dialogue, and how her shifting perspective aligns with the idea that *people aren't the problem, the problem is the problem*. By moving from a totalizing description of the person – mean, racist, power driven, so forth – to a perception of that same person as someone actually responding to a problem (in this case, fear) allows the problem to be responded to from a different vantage point.

The simple expression of *anger* or frustration, which would have satisfied the **R**eflective inquiry in an O**R**ID process, could have left the listener and interpreter with the impression that the anger was personally directed. Without a narrative stream to connect to, it could have been assumed that this expression of anger and frustration was sounding the same note as the first exchange of a discourse about disrespect of women or a disregard for people of color.

5.4.4 Connecting the two exchanges.

As a researcher, my interpretation of words does not have an impartial, neutral, or pure foundation. It is impossible to separate my meaning-making context as the interpreter and researcher from the text itself. My observations of the speaker relate to the way I make meaning of what is said. There is always a danger that as facilitator, recorder, and interpreter, I could reframe any speaker's voice to fit my own perspective. In a group setting like this one, even if I had extensive knowledge of the lives of each of the participants, it would be likely that much interpretation would occur at the referential and representational level. Any discourse analysis would then be very much influenced by my own positioning in a discursive context. The value added of the narrative stream is to offer insights into the speaker's own discursive context. However, even this does not completely prevent or mitigate the infusion of the researcher's interpretation of text or speech.

5.5 *Trouble in Mind* as Freirian Problem-Posing Material

The overall design of the narratively modified focused conversation model is to incorporate focus groups and other aspects of Freirian emancipatory dialogue with narrative inquiry principles. *Trouble in Mind* served a variety of purposes, including being the problem-posing material. It also equated to the *third thing* in Parker Palmer's Circle of Trust methodology (Palmer, 2004). In that approach the

facilitators often employ the use of what is labeled a *Third Thing*. This thing, be it a poem, song, art object or so on, is said to "evoke from us whatever the soul wants to attend to" (p. 93). While not embracing the notion that there is an essential self (or soul) that is waiting to be expressed, there is generative value in creating a shared set of metaphors and a contained set of observations for a group to reference. One significant aspect of Freirian method is that there are problem-posing materials that incorporate the generative themes expressed by the community (Hope & Timmel, 1995, p. 75). In those sessions, the people who had taken on the responsibility of listening and hearing the concerns of the people are then tasked with crafting some form of problem-posing material as a basis for analysis and solution generation. Frequently, the problem-posing materials could be a list of words or a picture; when literacy is a factor, it can also be drawings or even skits. The well-designed skit will contain a narration of the challenges, and there might even be an attempt to identify some possible solution choices. A well-designed problem-posing material will never give a proposed correct solution. The role of emancipatory dialogue is to spark conversation among community members and elicit a set of possible solutions that can then be investigated, deliberated, and, when appropriate, implemented.

Trouble in Mind was excellent as problem-posing material for this group. The play presented several conflicts regarding relationships of power across racial, gender, and generational lines and also posed issues about trust of institutions, specifically law enforcement.[28] The benefit of this production as a third thing or problem-posing material was that the author of the play, Alice Childress, never authorized a performance of a third act, which is where we would anticipate some measure of resolution. This leaves audiences poised and responsible for conducting the deliberation and dialogue needed to determine a way forward.

The play as problem-posing material or a third thing introduced another central set of metaphors for the conversation. The play allowed the metaphor of *community as theatre* and *individuals as actors* to be presented to the dialogue group. This complex set of metaphors has both promising possibilities for community work and also significant limitations. When using a theatre production as problem-posing material for a community while drawing on the performance

[28] One important issue in the play was the extent to which Black parents (or all people of color) should trust law enforcement with respect to the safety of their Black children. This question presented very contemporary issues.

metaphors to some extent, it is important for the facilitator to understand the limits of theatre as metaphor for community. (Wilshire, 1985) From a narrative and constructionist perspective, it is also important to make the distinction between representational communications as conceptualized as *performance* in Erving Goffman's role theory, and the conceptualization of an aesthetic, relational communications as expressed in Butler's *performativity*. These distinctions have been drawn in Chapter II.

5.6 Identifying Performativity and Shifting Performance

An excellent opportunity to tease out performativity as a concept was presented in the earlier example where Female speaker #3 described her mother and aunt's way of projecting to the doctors and hospital officials their sister's significance. There was certainly an aspect of the dressing and presentation that qualifies as performance. Yet what they seemed to be consciously tapping into was an aesthetic of significance that is characterized in certain clothing, accessorizing, carriage, and speech patterns. Recognizing that they and their sister were possibly being positioned as insignificant, based on a historical narratives laced with racism and classism, the performative aspects of their wardrobe practice as an act of resistance and a struggle against that marginalizing narrative and the relations of power would have predictive if not determinative effects of the quality of their sister's lived experience.

There are additional ways of understanding Butler's performativity and distinguishing it from Goffman's performance. Nash (2000) draws this distinction in discussing gender identity:

> Rather than either essentialist genders located in bodily difference or a kind of free-floating, fluid choice of gender identity, Butler suggests that women and men learn to perform the sedimented forms of gendered social practices that become so routinized as to appear natural. Gender does not exist outside its 'doing' but its performance is also a reiteration of previous 'doings' that become naturalized as gender *norms*. (pp. 654-55)

The performativity rather than fixity of identity at least allows the possibility of challenging and parodying these naturalized codes. While Butler focused especially on gender and sexual identities, this conceptualization of performativity is also well suited to consider the performativity of racialized identity constructs. It is

particularly notable that in communities like Greensboro racialized identities and the possibility horizons have been assaulted and constricted by a dominant narrative that establishes the appropriate positioning and performance for African Americans and other people of color as well as for Whites (Thandeka, 2000). The repetitive behaviors that cast identities may not allow a wide variation for actions, even those actions designed for protest or resistance. Hodgson (2005) states that "Performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act' but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (pp. 54-55). The citational quality indicates that what gives a speech act or aesthetic performance its performative quality is that the act refers to multiple occurrences in the past in which this utterance or aesthetic has performed or symbolized the performing of the act. Quoting Hodgson at some length

> [Butler's] vision of performativity thus proposes a recursive and reflexive model of identity, in which actions are always in a sense 'citations', re-enacting previous performances to establish a certain identity. Thus, for Butler, identity formation occurs through the 'forced reiteration of norms' (1993: 94), which gains force and meaning through repetition and sedimentation. Butler 'cites' Derrida to support this: 'could a performative utterance succeed if its formulation did not repeat a "coded" or iterable utterance, or in other words, if the formula I pronounce in order to open a meeting, launch a ship, or pronounce a marriage were not identifiable as conforming with an iterable model, if it were not then identifiable in some way as a "citation"?' (Derrida, 1988: 18). 'Performative utterances', as both words and deeds, are therefore citations of previous performances, institutionalized through repetition and over time becoming identifiable. This reiteration therefore sets out a link between performativity and rituals, institutions and, ultimately, social structures. (p. 51)

Paradoxically, the citational quality and re-enactment, in fact, resort to well-established community norms. In this way, certain performance, even as a mode of resistance, possibly reinforces the norms that established the meaning and also positioned them as inferior. This reinforces Butler's (1997) observation that the power we resist is often the power that establishes our being (p. 1). This is the work of discourse that is to be uncovered in these conversations. Placing observations in narrative streams and then sourcing the available range of emotion, meaning, and

action inside that same stream creates opportunities for dialogue participants to see the work of discourse and cultural narrative and ultimately consider effective ways to refuse the positions offered or to resist modes of performativity that reproduce disabling discursive patterns and consider alternative narratives that offer a broader agentic realm.

5.7 Conclusions Thus Far

The narratively modified focus conversation model of dialogue composed for this conversation was a bricolagic invention derived from focus group methodology. The subject of the focus group was a problem-posing theatre production of the type typical of Freirian emancipatory dialogue. The Freirian model is also foundational for the participatory action movement (Borda, 2013). The flow of conversation borrowed a very specific insight from the focused conversations method of the Canadian Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA). Specifically, the dialogic flow was designed to slow down the conversation and allow it to proceed at a pace that offered participants' insight into the process that occurs between making an observation and reacting to the meaning ascribed to the observation. The Focused conversation/ORID method was reconceptualized to infuse constructionist, specifically narrative and discursive practices. The observations were connected through conversation to a variety of narrative streams from which people would select to making meaning.

There are brief examples of where and how this model of conversation opened up space in otherwise compressed narratives to allow the possibility of new meanings to emerge. The multiple narrative streams also allows stories and utterances that were originally heard as a single note to be more clearly understood as a complex chord with historical and cultural reverberations.

Future Application of granular communication narrative stream analysis

Further exploration of the role of narrative stream and its relationship to the observation/interpretation/feelings realm might involve starting with an observation, asking observers to identify multiple narrative streams that could give meaning to that observation, and then noticing with the observer how it might have been that either the context or audience informed which narrative stream the interpretation was placed in. By following the plot line for each narrative, an

inquirer could work with the narrator to determine the emotions, meanings and actions available in each stream. Having then noticed that the range of actions differs based on the given stream, you could, following Epston and White, invite the narrator to identify a *preferred narrative* or draw from cultural and mythical story line to create a preferred narrative and identify the emotions, meanings and actions available inside the fiction that's created.

Because performativity requires repetition, performance becomes a valuable component of a major community change effort. To take on and try out new and different actions, emotional performances, interpretations, and situational responses in a playful and imaginative space like that created by theatre games and practices (Boal, 1985; Cohen, Varea, & Walker, 2011; Gergen & Gergen, 2012; McCarthy, 2004) can initiate the type of repetitive actions that allow new identities to emerge.

The data produced from this conversation when interrogated offers positive affirmation that the granular communication model holds potentially explanatory and revelatory promise and also gives strong indication that if used as a guide to inquiry could unveil for participants certain ways that narratives are constraining them and also identify openings for action.

5.8 Transition

Next, Chapter VI considers the process innovations that were involved in creating the second method at study in this thesis —narrative restorative community conferencing. While these two methods are separate and distinct methods that can be used independently of each other, the content analysis in Chapter VII gives ample demonstration of the value of their combined usage as well.

CHAPTER VI - NARRATIVE RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY CONFERENCING

6.1 Introduction to the NRCC Model

In this chapter, I analyze the Narrative Restorative Community Conferencing (NRCC) method developed as the model for the second conversation of the Greensboro residents following their first conversation about the play *Trouble in Mind*. At the end of the first conversation, and in subsequent electronic and phone communications, several residents had expressed a hope to continue in conversation. Among the concerns they expressed was the hope that a next conversation would offer an analysis of the Greensboro context, would not be divisive, and would move towards action, thus leading to a sense of hope that real change was possible. Because the conversations were an outgrowth of our (Frampton's and my) investigation into the impacts of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (GTRC) on the lived experience of the Greensboro community, I thought that the restorative justice inquiry framework might still be of value. I was also aware that, having been exposed to some notions of restorative justice through the work of the GTRC, many participants were skeptical of restorative justice as an approach.

The method that I developed was informed by the principles of restorative justice: a focus on inclusive processes, identifying the harms, determining who had both the obligations and who had the resources to put right the harms, and determining the measures needed to put right those harms (Zehr, 1995). However, there are significant limitations to many restorative processes, especially when applying them to historic, societal and generational harms (Weisberg, 2003; Hooker, 2011). One limitation is that restorative processes often overlook the systemic and discursive epicenters of harm and seek to respond only to the current episodes of rule or law-breaking (Hooker, 2011). Cognizant of others' as well as my own concerns, I wanted to balance considerations of restorative justice inquiry while introducing narrative and discursive principles and practices into the next conversation.

At the outset of this chapter, I restate the big view of the research, review the results of the first conversation and its contributions in laying a foundation for the second, and then preview the second conversation. Next, I describe in detail aspects

of the design and facilitation of the narrative restorative community conferencing (NRCC) process. I analyze the development of the two dialogue methods by considering Turnbull's (2002) eight stages for constructionist theory building and Heikkinen et al.'s (2007) five principles of validation for narrative action research. Finally, I propose the types of data that this method should produce and describe why such data would be helpful for Greensboro and for similarly situated communities in the future where interveners choose to apply this model. The data from the first and second conversations will then be considered in Chapter VII.

6.1.1 Big view.

The overall intention for the project was to consider whether narrative mediation processes were valuable for designing a community change action strategy. In order to introduce the narrative mediation trajectory into a large group process, I drew from, and then reconceptualized, an existing process to establish new processes that incorporated a narrative and social constructionist framework. I also considered how narrative mediation and restorative justice principles might inform the work of a community dialogue and community engagement process where the community has experienced a significant differential in lived experience (often violently reinforced) across a socially constructed category (race) over an extended period of time.

Repression and social inequality that are structurally reproduced and physically, often violently reinforced, most often establish and are stabilized by a dominant, oppressive, compressed narrative (Cobb, 2013). This type of dominant and compressed narrative has the effect of shaping identities (Butler, 1997) and resisting change efforts (Nelson, 2001). As described in Chapter II, narrative mediation and narratively-framed reconciliation models are two approaches Cobb proposes for addressing narrative compression (Cobb, 2013). Even though Cobb was primarily describing narrative compression at the interpersonal level when she proposed the use of narrative mediation, I apply it in a larger, multifaceted context of community change. Similarly, Nelson (2001) proposed that people must construct effective counterstories to undo the damage to identity embedded in dominant narratives. As described in the last section of this chapter, the narrative restorative community conferencing model developed for application in a large group format

accomplishes many of the tasks both Cobb and Nelson indicated as needed to repair identities and move towards equal agency and reconciliation.

6.2 Contributions of Conversation #1 to Success of Conversation #2

There are several ways in which the first conversation – a narratively modified focused conversation based on a theatrical production as a *third thing* – planted a seed for the success of the second conversation. The narratively modified focused conversation (NMFC) model introduced a social constructionist framework for speaking and analysis. Specifically, by basing their conversation on a theatre production, the participants were able to incorporate the performance metaphors of community as theatre and participants as role actors. Drawing parallels from the play and interpreting them through participants' own life narratives produced a contextual analysis that was externalized, action-oriented, and laced with discursively framed references.

The successful design and implementation of the first conversation did not require participants to become aware of or accept a social constructionist perspective. Rather, the framing of the questions led to answers framed in language that reflected a constructionist perspective. This suggests that the nature and range of available answers is embedded in the structure of the inquiry (Kuhn, 1996). The narrative restorative community conferencing (NRCC) model for the second conversation also did not require familiarity with or acceptance of social constructionism, and yet the framing of both inquiry processes invited participants into a constructionist, discursive analysis as the foundation for future community action. Specifically, the NMFC process infused the conversation with a framework of performativity, which itself opened a space for consideration of the work of discourse in the community and at the levels of individual identity and relational patterns. Second, the conceptualization of performativity and the metaphors of community as ongoing theatre with people as actors and the involvement of props, stage sets, scripts, and background stories – that is, *performing Greensboro* – were the underpinning for future explicitly externalized conversations like the one intended for the NRCC process of the second conversation.

6.2.1 Contribution # 1 – Introduction of metaphors.

The metaphors of identity as performance, community as theatre, and individuals as actors were introduced by drawing parallels with the play and linking

the life stories of characters with lived experiences of participants as *actors* in the community. Further, inviting participants to interpret observations of the play through personal narratives reinforced the strength of the metaphors. The performance and performative metaphors were extended in both the first and second conversations so that metaphors of *script* and *backstory* were able to stand in for the operation of discourse and master narrative in community.

Many participants' comments drew on the metaphor of script or backstory and could also be understood as describing the operation of master narrative or discourse, without the participants having to know or agree with the theoretical underpinnings. For instance, the following exchanges in the second conversation draw on the *community as theater* metaphor introduced in the first conversation. Here the speakers allude to the work of discourse in informing, guiding, and constraining behavior.

> ***Female Speaker #1****: The idea that misappropriation couldn't be the problem, 'cause people have to do the misappropriating, and I was thinking that it's not necessarily so. I don't think it's an individual problem. I don't think it's a personality problem, but it can be a behavioral problem.*
> ***Male Speaker #5****: I was going to say that.*
> ***Male Speaker #7****: Okay. Well let me try and connect that with what* [Female Speaker #1] *is saying. I think over here we are saying inside myself I become something I don't want to be.*
> ***Male Speaker #6****: Mm hmm* (positive).
> ***Male Speaker #7****: Because I feel like I have to be, to conform with the community script so to speak, and so the problem can be partly inside me or acted out by me without being, like* [facilitator] *said 'not of my essence'.*
> ***Facilitator****: Okay.*
> ***Female Speaker #1****: Yes.*
> ***Male Speaker #4****: Okay which I kind of see where you are driving, 'cause it could be, it could be a custom that is here and I make the argument that because I adhere to that I'm going to be compliant. I'm going to adhere to it. It could be an ideology that has lasted for - I don't know - decades or centuries.*
> ***Facilitator****: Centuries - right?*

Male Speaker #4*: And we buy into it, and the only reason it has any force is because we do buy into it. So we change the script or the ideology or the custom; then the behavior could change.*
Male Speaker #5*: So you say changing "the script," and one of the issues in the play was…*
Female Speaker #1*: The actual script…*
Facilitator*: Right! The script required a certain conformity to a certain way of being, and I think that actually that whole notion of what I talked about … discourse, but that old notion of there is something else out there that we live into - a script, a story, a narrative, which I think that most people who come to Greensboro, in fact, are given a narrative.*
Female Speaker #1*: Mm hmm.*
Facilitator*: There are multiple narratives of Greensboro: most of us live into one or another or another of them.*

In context, the comment of Male Speaker #7 was significant. It might be, following Deleuze, a line of flight for him. Male speaker #7 is one of the cell leaders for the People's Institute's Undoing Racism program described in Chapter II. The Institute's Undoing Racism® program heavily relies on an essentialist analysis in which all White people are racist and a structural analysis in which systems are primarily built on a foundation of structural racism. This comment could be the beginning point for reconsidering the essentialist approach to problem analysis and moving towards living and operating from the type of conversation in which he is able to externalize problematics. His recognition of the externalized locus for some of his own behaviors is followed with a series of connections about the roles of the community narrative, script, and ideology. This suggests that at least this participant is having insights concerning the work of some historical and interwoven sets of narratives in shaping identities and behaviors, including his own, without necessarily knowing or thinking specifically about discourse from a theoretical or practical perspective.

If these conversations were explicitly held in terms of discourses and their effects on shaping identity and relationships in a community, Male Speaker #4's notion of custom as an identity-shaping and behavior-modifying force would also be right in line with that conversation. Male Speaker #5 then draws the direct connection between being guided by unspoken narratives and the script in the play. This idea of changing the script in many ways foreshadowed the next conversation

where participants were invited to choose a preferred narrative for their lived experience. The interweaving of the metaphors associated with performance allows speakers to develop a vocabulary and facility with ideas that works back and forth between community analysis and performance descriptions while at the same time allowing the facilitator to investigate the roles of narrative and discursive positioning in shaping relational patterns and institutional structures in the Greensboro context.

Another comment that spoke directly about a performance metaphor (script) but seemed to reflect an implicit understanding of the operation of discourse without drawing on that language occurred in the continuation of the previous exchange:

> ***Male Speaker #6****: Yeah, I get it. I think I understood you when you explained it that time. I think that happened to me a few times. I found myself wanting different actors to say certain words, and that didn't happen, or at least not the way that I hoped would have increased my appreciation of the complexity of the situation. So, for example: I find that I was frustrated and disappointed with the director, because there was a time when I said to myself, "I wish to God that there was a different script," because at times he had some charisma, some ability to give a glimpse, to show what human beings really feel. And sometimes most of the helpful exercises he really did to help people – I wouldn't say to transcend race and culture but … to find their shared values where it needs to be human. That's what I love about the theater. And his vulnerable moments, I was really hoping that he would help us to know who he was, so we could really know. I was really wanting him to say, "I was abused as a child," or "I'm a gay man". To get to some of the deeper parts, to have him become empathetic to the other people that have gone on stage, to find some shared values. I was just - I got to one area where I was disappointed that they were limited with the writer and with the character and … Does that kind of get at what you are pointing to?*

The idea that people – in this case the Director – could act only within the limitations of the script he was living is a parallel to the idea that the dominant narratives and various discursive positions people are offered and assume shape the range of action they see for themselves and others imagine and expect for them. Even the opportunity for vulnerability and empathetic expression was limited by the *script*. This discussion of the role of the script and the limitations, constraints, and expectations that the script imposed on the actors, and to some extent the audience, served a dual capacity in laying groundwork for the second conversation. It is

interesting that the participant who offered the comment felt *frustrated by the script* and hoped the actor could *move outside the script*. At the same time, the participant did not have a different expectation or blame the actor. The speaker expressed frustration with the writer (the creator of the narrative or discourse). This suggests that once people begin operating from an externalizing analysis – in this instance the community's script placing constraints on performance and possibility for vulnerability and empathy – even when they would like things to be different, they are at least more aware of ways in which community narratives place limitations on people's behaviors as opposed to ascribing the behavior to a fatal flaw in the individual's character.

What was not as clear was whether the speaker recognized that the community narrative also limited the expectations he was willing to have for others. By asking for additional information that would make the character *more empathetic*, Male Speaker #6 was implicitly requesting a repositioning of the character, and, by extension, repositioning himself in his viewing of the character. The speaker's frustration at wanting the character to be different suggests he was locked into a particular framing of the character and had no other way of viewing or relating to the character. Said differently, the script offered, and the participant accepted, the positioning of the director. He wanted to consider repositioning the director, but needed new information to have permission to change his positioning.

If our understanding of the community's script limits the expectations we allow ourselves to have of others or of ourselves or limits our capacity to view others empathetically, in what ways do we consciously or unconsciously contribute to the reproduction of the relationships and conditions we decry? Processes like NMFC and NRCC that give participants a greater ability to notice the effects of narrative and discourse should also contribute to a more effective action strategy for the community.

It was also helpful in establishing an action platform to have participants avoid the totalizing and essentializing conversations and problem descriptions that leave few openings for action. Essentializing and totalizing problem descriptions locate the problem as a core component or characteristic of the person or type of people, thus making a narrative shift much more challenging. The narrative method of externalizing conversations for the naming of a problem is conceived to address

that concern (Winslade & Monk, 2008). The Narratively Modified Focused Conversation process of Conversation #1 laid an excellent foundation for the externalizing conversations in Conversation #2.

6.2.2 Contribution # 2 - Began externalizing conversations.

In addition to offering a metaphorical framing for social construction and discourse, a major accomplishment of the first conversation was familiarizing participants with the practice of externalizing conversations that would have a more prominent place in the second conversation. When describing the constraints that the script placed on the actors (both in the play and in the play about the play), participants located problematic actions in the script instead of in the essential nature or innate character of individual actors. In the following exchange, the speakers began talking about the story line as a source of conflict.

> ***Male Speaker #5****: You know, this is an analogy about a thousand hands holding on a log, and each one makes the other one as a rudder. And I was sitting there and saying, "I want this damn log." And I realized that nobody has the rudder. We're kind of just going down this river. And there's all of this drama going on, and you know, then it hit me. My takeaway* [from the play] *was that we're all into the drama, but there's still not enough analysis for people to understand what's happening. Every one of those characters, they may not be the cause of the reality that they're living in, but they sure ought to be! There's got to be a way for us maybe to be the director and sit back and look at all this and say, "You know, this stuff stinks. Let me clean it up." And we see we'll still be living the same life where there's a lot of drama going on, but we do not understand why it is.*
>
> ***Facilitator:*** *Great.*
>
> ***Female Speaker #8:*** *I guess I was thinking how when you're dealing with a structure where you got both that sort of power and domination in a few people, how much that distorts all of the relationships so that nobody there was being honest and everybody was trying to cope with the situation of dominion. Instead of being themselves, nobody could feel that they were really. And he* [the Director] *kept saying, "Be authentic," but nobody could be authentic in that situation, because if they were, they were kind of out of the job. So it's that bind of when you got somebody here even though … I mean he wasn't able control his emotions, and he felt like a victim himself, but in that particular situation*

in the play, he had the power, and so everybody had to act in a way that was reacting to that power, and they couldn't be honest with each other, and they couldn't really say what was going on. And then when the lie was exposed, he just left, and then everybody had to deal with him. And part of it is that how do we then, how do we get out of that, and how do we … This is what was happening in the 50s and 60s. It's still happening now. We're still having these kinds of discussions. We're still talking about divide and conquer. It just hasn't changed very much. So how do we … we may not be able to change the fact that he's in control, but how do we figure out how we talk to each other?

Male Speaker #7: *For me it was a play about a misunderstanding, and therefore a misuse of power, that causes individuals to kind of nuance or be inauthentic as it relates to how we live, and therefore, just really complicating all the other relational connections that we have together as human beings. And then my takeaway was a more prophetic piece for me: who says that if we can do right and can really get into some kind of unity, that there is a divine commanded blessing associated with the struggle to get it right? And that was where the real hope that I left with [was], because when I left* [the theater]*, I was pretty frustrated and angry, because I still saw myself in some ways as living a life where I still have to nuance even if I detest it, but it's some fraction of my life I had to admit that I'm still nuancing my life. But the prophetic piece, the hope in it all for me was that if you can keep attempting to move forward in some way to really find the kind of unity that can exist, that opportunity to find association or to command a blessing not just for me because I'm Black or because you're White, but because we're human.*

Male Speaker #8: *What I take away from it is that people of color in particular are forced to contort themselves unnaturally to survive with racism, and more generally, that people are … there's some universal sense that people have to contort themselves to deal and survive with unchecked power, and the question that was raised to me is at what point do we … what is our breaking point? When just to be, [when just in order to] maintain our integrity, when do we say, "Enough?" And how far can we be pushed then before we have to just stop to say, "Enough?"*

Female Speaker #9*: I think also, I think for me it was about courage and lack of courage, different levels of courage, the courage to be who you are, to listen to someone else, to empathize. And the takeaway for me was futility, and sometimes not knowing who the man behind the screen*

> *is, because ultimately the guy that was making it hard for everyone is not really the guy that was controlling the action; that there is something behind the scenes and that sometimes when you're fighting, you don't remember who you're fighting, and maybe even why. You don't know who [or] where the "no" is actually coming from. And even if you have the courage to communicate, you're not always communicating with the person that has the most leverage or the solution.*

This entire exchange was remarkable in that the participants were describing external problematics they personally struggle against while linking it to the themes of the play. These conversations also foreshadow the content analysis based on the Foucauldian framing of power in Chapter VII. Participants identified several external problematics in the first conversation – dominant narrative, misinformation, economic constraints, and use and misuse of power – that would be reprised in the explicitly externalizing conversation in the second conversation.

As mentioned in Chapter III, the second conversation was not designed until the first had been concluded. In fact, the first conversation did not even occur with any contemplation of a second conversation. Still, several insightful comments offered in the second conversation led me to conclude that the first conversation was valuable in the progression towards the construction of an externalized, less compressed narrative as a foundation for a community action agenda. Using a *third thing* or Freirian code like a play to infuse metaphors of performance and performativity serves a group well in an overall action design process.

This chapter is primarily about a facilitation *process*. However, it is the conversational content that in many ways demonstrates the effectiveness of the facilitation process. The remainder of the analysis in this chapter identifies facilitator interventions introduced in the second conversation. Chapter VII will then consider the content produced from the methods that have been analyzed in Chapters V and VI in terms of its value for community engagement and structuring collective action.

6.3 Preview of Conversation #2

The second conversation was designed to accomplish the first several significant foci of a narrative mediation process. As presented by Monk and Winslade (2013), these elements include

a. Have an *externalizing conversation* to separate out the conflict-saturated narrative;

b. *Map the conflict* to discover the ways it manifests in the personal lived experiences of community members;
c. *Double listen* to identify both the stated and the unstated, to identify which possibilities are included and which are left out of a specific telling of a story;
d. *Identify unique and alternative outcomes* that would not be predicted by the dominant, conflict-saturated narrative;
e. *Do reverse mapping* to identify the values and qualities that allow the unique outcomes to occur and that ground the alternative narratives; and
f. Have participants *identify a preferred narrative from among the available narratives they have named and mapped.*

Participants actually began to identify the type of performance and conditions that would sustain the preferred narrative, another step in narrative mediation; yet I chose intentionally to wrap up and not follow that line of conversation until an even more diverse participant group would be available to participate in the first stages of the narrative mediation process within a broader community context.

6.4 Reconceptualizing Narrative Restorative Conferencing

Over the past thirty years, participatory processes have been increasingly used in response to incidents of criminal wrongdoing. Many conferencing processes have found a welcome reception in response to incidents of juvenile crime, especially non-violent criminal activity (Bazemore, 2000). Restorative conferencing, family group conferencing, and victim-offender conferencing have been among the more popular forms. Bazemore also notes that "influenced … by larger *restorative justice* and *community justice* movements, participants in these encounters seem concerned about acknowledging personal responsibility for crime and about ensuring that young offenders receive appropriate sanctions that allow them to make amends" (p. 227). Standard restorative conferencing follows the inquiry principles of a typical restorative justice process: What harms were done? What will it take to put it right? Whose obligation and responsibility is it to put it right? Who are the affected stakeholders, and what process would best involve the broadest possible array of stakeholders in determining the actions needed for redressing any harms and broken relationships (Zehr, 1995)?

Monk and Winslade (2013) have modified the restorative conferencing model to incorporate principles and practices developed for narrative mediation and

narrative therapy. In their description of narrative restorative conferencing as also elaborated by Winslade and Williams (2012), the process was applied in the context of school discipline, but could also be applied in other cases of criminal wrongdoing.

There are also developments from a different theoretical and practical perspective that informed the development of the narrative restorative community conferencing model developed for this project. David Denborough and his colleagues affiliated with the Dulwich Centre (http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au/about-dulwich-centre.html) have developed a set of practices for individuals, groups, and communities that have experienced hardships and trauma. These practices have been used with increasing promise in places like Rwanda, Srebrenica, South Africa, and Colombia (South America) (Denborough, 2010). While some practices like collective song-writing, collective narrative documents, and the Kite of Life have all been applied in contexts of collective trauma, they are each still in developmental stages and most often applied in the direct aftermath of a particularly traumagenic period (http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au/collective-narrative-practice.html). The design principles of the NRCC are conceived for application in circumstances of longstanding division and marginalization that have become normalized in the current community context.

The principles of conferencing as presented by Bazemore (2000) or Monk and Winslade (2013) and the principles of collective narrative practice, specifically, the Kite of Life developed by Denborough et al., (2010) might be valuable in the current context of Greensboro or other communitywide conversations, but any such processes would require reconceptualization because the contexts are distinct. First, in the applications described by both Bazemore and Monk and Winslade, the context under consideration is relatively contained. For instance, school discipline cases like the one described by Monk and Winslade as their exemplar usually occur in response to a specific episode of breaking a definable and often (at least somewhat) agreed upon set of rules.[29] There are usually a definable set of actors characterized as wrongdoers and an equally definable set of community members characterized as directly experiencing the impacts of the wrongdoing, even if many others in the

[29] While the children who participate in these conferences usually do not have a role in defining the rules, as would be required for total agreement and buy-in, there is a the sense that students in a school setting are at least aware of the rules and their responsibility to follow them.

community experience the peripheral harms or a loss of safety or certainty or loss of reputation and strained relationships.

There is no obvious or even natural application of the restorative conferencing model as conceived by Bazemore or Monk and Winslade to an historical, diffuse, normalized, multifaceted set of social divisions that have neither a specific recent conflict episode as a focus for conversation, nor a clear delineation between wrongdoers and those who have experienced the impacts of such wrongdoing. Often, the actions that cause the initial harm – like slavery or segregation – were not criminal wrongdoing at the time they occurred. The implements of harm creation may have grown out of culturally sanctioned activity. In the case of modern-day racial inequity, many of the initial harms occurred one or more generations ago, and the relational patterns set in place, while they have changed, have had their core existence for multiple generations. In such cases, it is difficult to require parties to accept responsibility for wrongdoing or experience a sense of obligation for putting things right.

Another distinction between the Bazemore and Monk and Winslade model and the current applications of restorative community conferencing lies in terms of the notion of *restoration*. In instances of juvenile wrongdoing or school misconduct, there is an effort to restore a sense of community, or respect, or relationships. In contrast, in many larger social contexts, such as communities like Greensboro, which have been divided by law, relational patterns, institutional practices, and other ways of performing the culture and reinforced violently over time, Weisberg (2003) argues that there may never have been a community to look back to as a model for restoration or for which to seek reconciliation. There is an ongoing debate in the field of restorative justice about whether restorative justice practices and principles, including restorative conferencing, can be fruitfully or even appropriately applied to multigenerational, historical societal harms, and whether restorative justice principles could have the capacity to affect structural issues of marginalization, such as structural racism, heterosexism, or poverty (Daly, 2000).

Even in the case of the various Truth and Reconciliation processes that have been applied to national and societal conflicts (in South Africa, Liberia, Chile), they were applied in instances where specific actors could be identified as having violated specific rules or having done harm to specific people. In those instances, there is less

than uniform agreement that restorative approaches have provided the desired value or laid the foundation for substantial community change (Avruch, 2010). The current project seeks to determine whether the same principles and practices can be the basis for community action when the direct interpersonal harms may be several decades old, and the ongoing harms are structural, systemic, and even discursive. The present application of narrative restorative conferencing was intended to create the same conversational and action trajectory for a larger group that a narrative mediation or narrative restorative conferencing process might create for a smaller interpersonal conflict.

I was aware of the limitations of the basic conferencing process in the context in which I was working. Moreover, my actions as facilitator influenced the direction and content of the conversation. Although I sought to preserve content neutrality while directing the process, it is important to identify the most common interventions that I made to consider ways that I as the facilitator may have influenced the outcome.

6.5 Facilitator Interventions

As facilitator, I sought to minimize the amount of content I introduced personally into the conversation. However, there were several actions that I took intentionally to draw out participants' discussion of their own content offerings. These actions were not *neutral*, in the sense that I was purposefully causing the participants to consider what they offered into the conversational space, not only for purposes of clarity, but also at times to deconstruct or decompress (Cobb, 2013) the narrative, to allow them to identify additional openings for action or take lines of flight that might be available from a different perspective. These facilitator interventions influenced the conversational content. There were two general modes of facilitator intervention that I offered on several different occasions. Because they occurred at several points of the conversation, for each mode I will present a description, an example, and a rationale.

The first style of facilitator intervention involved using the participants' own words as much as possible to cause them to examine the words they used. For instance,

> ***Male Speaker #8:*** *I wrote "personal experience versus conventional views."*
> ***Facilitator:*** *Personal experience versus conventional views.*

Male Speaker #8: *Yeah.*
Facilitator: *Say more about that.*
Male Speaker #8: *Well, I think most of what Will Etta did and her version of authenticity versus how the director thinks she should be.*
Facilitator: *Okay.*
Male Speaker #8: *And they are both trying to accommodate what would be in the best interest of the play, but the director is basing his direction off of a conventional view versus Will Etta's actual experience of who she is.*
Facilitator: *Okay, so distinguish that for me from the "misrepresentation" that was being spoken about earlier.*
Male Speaker #8: *Oh I think it's … I think there are, there is plenty of overlap, but…*
Facilitator: *Okay.*
Male Speaker #8: *I guess what I'm saying and the misrepresentation … I see that my "conventional views" label is the cause of the misrepresentation.*
Facilitator: *All right.*

This exchange allowed me as a facilitator to rely on the participant's actual languaging while at the same time making it clear how his language was intended to convey a different set of ideas from an earlier speaker who had used similar language to distinguish between misrepresentation and personal experiences versus conventional views. This exchange also allowed for a more nuanced mapping. By having the participant describe the relationship between his idea and an earlier one, the group could notice the problematic of conventional views was a source of misrepresentation others had identified earlier. After this exchange, I recorded *conventional views vs. personal experience* as a cause in the circle, but at the outer edge of the inner circle, and *misrepresentation* as a spur in the problem-mapping process. I chose to record *conventional views* as a cause but not a central cause to reflect some of the other problematics, such as fear, isolation, and misinformation that had already been named and might, in fact, be recognized as more primary causes.

The second type of intervention I often used was to distinguish multiple ideas included in a speaker's single statement. Pointing out that a statement included

multiple ideas was an effort to invite the speaker to clarify priority among concepts, if that was appropriate, and also to nuance and refine several concepts.

The following is another example where facilitator intervention was intended to clarify a participant's language so that everyone would have a chance of sharing the meanings the speaker was trying to convey. Because meaning making is a co-active process, any time the community can achieve shared usage of a particular word or symbol this forms the community even further (Ochs & Capps, 1996).

> ***Male Speaker #5*** [in response to the facilitator's ongoing request to name the problematic]: *Money, money.*
> ***Facilitator****: Money?*
> ***Male Speaker #5****: Everyone is operating* [out] *of a fear of not being paid, not having a job, wanting to make money, to have a hit to … it's major capitalism; commerce is a major problem.*
> ***Facilitator****: Okay, so when you started out you talked about "money" and then the fear, but this is different. This isn't actually just fear; is there more specific fear or … ?*
> ***Male Speaker #5****: Or yes, it's a … they work within a system. They work within a system where they have to behave a certain way to guarantee financial success.*
> ***Facilitator****: Okay.*
> ***Male Speaker #5****: Or financial survival; perhaps there are various levels of success.*
> ***Facilitator****: All right, 'cause I'm trying to make sure I don't add my own meaning. So would you still say that's money? Would you label that money, and that would clear it up for you, or is there something else?*
> ***Male Speaker #5****: There is a capitalist system. I might go with "capitalism" instead of money. Don't … look … I don't want to see those referenced as words of mine! [Laughter**]***
> ***Facilitator****: All right.*

In this exchange, *money* was attached to several different discursive threads, any one of which could have been inserted by the facilitator during the feedback and summation portion of the conversation. Each of these various discourses – financial survival, capitalism, commerce, and underpaying – would invite different narrative streams for interpretation by other participants. Inviting the participant to name all of these discourses allowed several others to connect to whichever narrative they

found the most resonant, and, at the same time, avoided the problem of me as the facilitator adding my own chosen interpretation from among the available meanings.

Those basic facilitator interventions were repeated at several points throughout the conversational process, even if not specifically referenced in the conversation flow. Two modes of facilitator intervention were, however, more central to narrative practice: deconstructive listening and double listening.

6.6 Flow of the Second Conversation

A. Introductions
B. Big View /Review/ Preview – Facilitator's review of first group conversation in terms of process and connection of the outcome of the first conversation to the design of the second conversation.
C. *Practice Dialogue* – focused on *Trouble in Mind* – Introduce externalizing and other narrative practices by focusing on the play (continuation of Parker Palmer's *third thing* methodology).
    a. Externalizing conversation naming the primary problematics in the play
    b. Mapping the problematics
    c. Identifying unique outcomes as the basis for an alternative story
D. Performing Greensboro
    a. Externalizing conversation naming significant problematics of Greensboro
    b. Mapping the effects of the problematics
    c. Summarizing the map of the dominant narrative
    d. Reverse mapping
        i. Identifying unique outcomes
        ii. Unveiling the qualities of the unique outcomes that provide the foundation for alternative narratives
    e. Comparative summarizing of alternative and dominant narratives
    f. Determining participants' preferred narrative
E. Closure

With the exception of the introductions and the closure, the process had a spiraling trajectory in the sense that each subsequent section of the conversation built on and referred back to all previous conversation segments. Each previous phase of the process continued, even when the next phase had been introduced. This was reflected where parties referred back to previous sections of the conversation to

bolster or orient their current comments. This is typical for a narrative mediation process.

6.6.1 Introductions.

I invited participants to introduce themselves *in one breath*.

Facilitator: *So it occurs to me that not everyone that is here today was able to make it the first time we got together, so it may be the case that not everybody knows everyone, and so why don't we just go around and do the kind of one-breath introduction, everybody doing the one-breath introduction of yourself in this space? Let's start here.*

Limiting the reference to titles, organizations, work history, personal and professional accomplishments, and other such information at the outset of the conversation is important for establishing a certain tone. From a constructionist perspective, "[W]e do not assume that people's identities are primary, stable, and singular … who people are is a matter of constant contradiction, change, and ongoing struggle" (Drewery & Winslade, 1997, p. 38). Situating participants in a particular identity through the linkage with their titles, work locations, and so on would counter this understanding of identity. Unlike the first conversation, there was no vocalized resistance to the omission of specific titles or work or community histories. This could have been because people recalled that information from the previous session, although it had been more than six weeks earlier. It could also be because the instruction was to give a *one-breath* introduction without explicitly limiting the mention of job titles and community history, so there was no identifiable point of resistance. However, it could also be that from the first conversation people were aware that titles and job histories would not be relevant to the conversation we were likely to have. Either way, participants responded to the prompt with just their names, or a few new participants also identified the part of town they lived in.

6.6.2 Big View /review/ preview.

Facilitator: *I'm [**Facilitator**]. Great! I'm glad everybody is here. I'm excited. So we started this conversation last time. I know a few folks weren't here. We were doing this thing. Parker Palmer is one of my favorite educators and theologian types. He talks about what he calls "third things". He says you do this: there's a* third thing*, which is to say you place something in the middle of the room … a poem, a song, an object, or something like that, and that becomes the* third thing *that*

everybody speaks to whatever it draws them to, whatever the stories are, the memories, the reflections, the ideas that it draws them to, and so it's not necessarily creating a talk across the room; it's everybody responding to the third thing*, and our* third thing *has been the play. You are the first thing, the other participants in the circle are the second thing, and the art piece is the third thing.*

And in one of the reflections that we got from a number of you, a number of you gave us the same feedback, which was it would be really helpful to have some really good dialogue, and Greensboro is not short of dialogue, but there is some value in action. Correct? Do some of you remember that? Does that sound familiar for some of you? And so part of what I really think is important is for us to figure out, if you're going to take action, what is the thing to act on and what is the issue or problem? How would you name the thing to do? How would you name the problematic or the place that would benefit from action? Does that make sense?

As presented in the transcript segment above, after the introductions, I offered a *big view, review, preview* description of why we were having these conversations (big view), what we had accomplished to this point (review), and what that evening's conversation goals and the overall project goals were (preview). Big View/review/preview is a facilitator's introduction designed to orient all participants minimally to the process up to that point and to offer an understanding of how the process segments connect. This recognizes that a few participants had not been involved in the first conversation. It also reminds those who had been in the conversation about the process, its intentions, and its outcomes.

After a review of the previous process and a description of the theory behind the last conversation – which they had not received at the time – the next step was to preview for them the conversation that they were about to have. The intention was to make a connection to why this conversation was designed the way it was; it seemed important to indicate that this conversation was designed to lead towards action.

6.6.3 Process description preview.

Facilitator*: What I actually wanted to do was try a method for naming the problem, but I wanted to practice first using the play. So I want to practice naming the problem in the play in a specific way, and then after we do that for just a little while, then we can come back and talk*

specifically about Greensboro, 'cause while there may be some metaphors, some things that are pointed to in the play that might point to Greensboro, there's probably a very different way of naming what happens in Greensboro, and so I want to invite you all to try that. Does that make sense? Yeah? Okay. Great! So this is my first assertion: my first assertion is that "the people are never the problem. The people aren't the problem, the problem is the problem," and I want to try and name the problem based on that assertion.

6.6.4 Practice dialogue – Focused on *Trouble in Mind*.

From the preliminary and informal conversations I had with many of the participants and from the observations I had made during the several months of community observations, there were few, if any, community practitioners or therapists in the Greensboro or Guilford County area who practiced within a primarily and explicitly narrative framework. This suggested to me that the model of dialogue and the types of questions that I would ask in the second evening's conversations were likely to be unfamiliar to most, and possibly all, of the participants. Externalizing conversations, problem mapping, reverse mapping, etc., are the narrative practices I sought to employ. In order to introduce the practices and have the participants get comfortable with the types of questions, the nature of responses, and the rhythm of this conversation, I chose first to *practice* with the play, which many of them had attended. The value added by practicing with *Trouble in Mind* as the basis for the conversation was that many issues participants experienced in Greensboro would possibly have either a parallel or a metaphorical representation in the play. This would give participants practice in naming or framing some of the issues and noticing how a mapping process might work.

The practice dialogue proceeded this way. I started with a large white easel pad with blank pages at the front of the room. After the introductions and the Big View/Review/Preview, I drew a large circle in the middle of the page and wrote above the circle: *"The Problem is the Problem,"* I initiated the conversation:

***Facilitator**: From what you remember in the play, what was the major problem or problematic, or how would you name a major problematic in the play? Actually, let's do it this way.*
***Female Speaker #1**: I think equality.*
***Facilitator**: Thank you. That's really helpful. Let's do it this way: part of the reason that I offered you all those index cards was to give you an*

opportunity to actually reflect on the question once I asked it. So … why don't I give you a moment just to reflect on it, and if you were trying to name it, if you were trying to synthesize or name what the thing, or a primary problematic, was, how would you name it? So just take a second to reflect on that, and then I'll invite some responses.

{PAUSE… 90 SECONDS OF SILENCE}

6.6.5 Externalizing conversation.

Externalizing conversations are one of the nine hallmarks of a narrative mediation process. The practice of an externalizing conversation is to invite participants to identify and fully develop a problem story and then to step outside of the story to notice its effects and implications for their lives (White & Epston, 1990). Based on the assertion that people live inside and out of their stories, there is a sense among constructionists in general, and narrative practitioners in particular, that the story construction that people operate inside of and out of creates an *as if* sense of reality (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and that *as if* sense constrains behavior, performance, relationships, identity, and so on by limiting the field of perceived possible and appropriate actions. Naming the story and then stepping outside of it creates awareness of more openings for action than an individual might perceive while still fully operating from inside the story. Also, being able to see oneself as existing outside the story increases the sense of agency (Cobb, 2013).

In therapeutic settings, it has been noted that "family problems can be enormously divisive and … can push family members into a search for who is to blame. Externalizing conversations, by contrast, invite them to work together against their problem" (Monk et al., 1997, p. 12). This same principle is magnified in its importance in a community context like Greensboro where the community has been divided across socially constructed boundaries for multiple generations. The pervasive story lines concerning this division are laced with blame and rancor. In these circumstances, identities of people are often shaped in part by their opposition and antagonism toward other groups (Butler, 1997) – those who are to blame and those who just stand by. The antagonism is usually maintained through the *legacy* of stories, histories, folklore, mythologies and lies embedded in the cultural narrative. The same antagonism is usually perpetuated and reproduced by the separation, misinformation, and lack of information built into systems, institutions, laws, policies, and culturally established relationship patterns that exist often as the

aftermath of some historical traumagenic period (Hooker & Czjaikowski, 2012). In order to transform these contexts, efforts must be taken to create dialogue or engagement that does not become divisive. Externalizing conversations are an important part of a strategy in that regard.

In this conversation, once an externalizing conversation was initiated, the naming process proceeded for some time. From time to time, I would restate the prompt, "*How (else) would you name it*?" Other times, I would offer a brief summary of what had been named up to that point and then ask for other ways of "naming the primary problematic." When recording the responses, I elected as facilitator to write what I understood to be problematics inside the circle and the results of or responses to the problematics on spurs at the outside of the circle (see Figure VI.-1).

From time to time, to keep focused on the actual naming of the problematic without moving too quickly to a discussion of the results of or responses to the problematic, I would ask whether the naming that a participant offered was an actual problem or the result of a problem. This process was dynamic, and responses varied within the group. It also became clear that the selection process that led to the conversation among this particular group of participants actually narrowed the experiential narrative described in the process.

The descriptions of problematics most likely reflected a narrower range of perspectives because of many participants' shared characteristics. Most were people

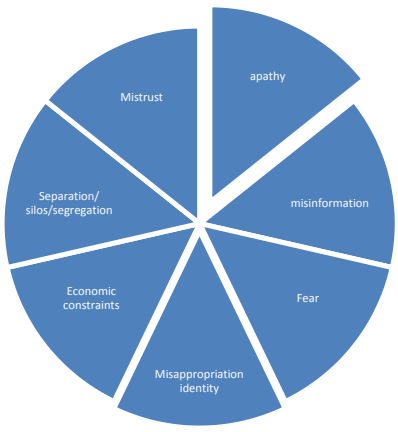


FIG VI - 1 - GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF PROBLEMATIC NAMING

who have worked either in professional or civic/volunteer roles across socially constructed boundaries, suggesting that most are probably relatively thoughtful

about community dynamics. This would not be expected from a randomly selected group in a community. It is likely that the range and tenor of descriptions would be substantially different from a less homogenous group. Further, there would likely be more contending for the shape of the narrative in a differently assembled group. This will be one of several factors for consideration as next steps in refining this method.

To make sure that participants experienced most of the process in order to be able to later evaluate whether a larger community gathering based on a version of this process might be helpful, I did not exhaust the naming process before moving on to mapping. A more diverse group would require more time, and I would create opportunities for more story-sharing around the naming and mapping process.

6.6.6 Mapping.

At this point, in accord with the time available – not because I felt either the energy waning for problem naming or that the group had exhausted all possible ways of naming – I directed participants to continue naming the problematic and also begin focusing on results of, or responses to, the problematics already named. To aid this process, I highlighted specific problems the group had named and asked for examples.

> ***Facilitator:*** *So let me just do this for just a second … What were some of the results of these problems when this oppression, or the absence of equality, the misrepresentation, possibly based on conventional views, or the archetypes, misappropriation, the demands of the system, the fear, the lack of trust, the ego, the pain … just map it for me. What were some of the things that have come about? … What were some of the results of that? If these are the problems, then we get a chance to see what are some of the results? What are some of the ways that these problems actually showed up in the play?*
>
> ***Male Speaker #1****: A good successful play typically relies upon the cast that can pass the ball, can pass lines that are fun, and they are great to work together, and that was broken in a lot of ways. As a result, the play potentially suffers not the sense of an ideal play. It's… there's distrust from the cast, and it creates some horrible moments on stage.*
>
> ***Facilitator****: Okay. So distrust. Give me one example of where the distrust actually showed up.*
>
> ***Male speaker #1****: Well, certainly, the director went with his other crew into the back room to have the power conversations.*
>
> ***Facilitator****: Okay.*

> ***Male Speaker #4**: Which was made a big statement to say, "You all are the problem". I mean, he used a lot of that language, and it's just devastating to trust.*

The naming and mapping process for the play was intentionally brought to a close without thoroughly completing the process of naming and mapping the problematic in the play. Participants were then invited to identify briefly examples of unique outcomes that supported an alternative narrative to the dominant discourse. The play was used as a practice dialogue to introduce the practices of naming and mapping, give the participants the experience of externalizing conversations, create a conversational rhythm that we could replicate when discussing the community, and set the pace for this type of discussion. Sometimes when people have offered their first naming, they may get distracted and be ready to move on. The experience analyzing the play allowed them to have a sense of how they could participate and where they would need patience.

Figure VI- 2 - A graphic representation of a mapped problem Performing Greensboro

After a quick wrap-up of the play discussion, there was a direct transition from the practice dialogue to a dialogue about Greensboro. In the transition to participants' lived experience of their community, it was important to continue to seed the metaphor of community as theatre and to invite them into a process about a less specific or contained set of events.

Facilitator: [reflecting on the last comment about the unique outcomes] *… the only reason why we're doing that is because there's a main story. The play presents a main story, and most of the time you see what the main story is, and inside of it, there is all this stuff happening. And then there is an alternative story that is sitting in there, and often, we either do or do not see it, we do not give it its significance, or we do not do enough to nurture the alternative story so that the alternative can actually become the primary story. I love the fact that [Alice Childress] only produced two acts, right? It gives you the opportunity to say how you would actually want to construct a different narrative or change the narrative that is there, which leads me to the question about Greensboro.*

6.6.7 Externalizing conversation naming significant problematics of Greensboro.

At this point, I took the graphic notes I had made in mapping the play and taped them on the lower portion of the easel. Then I started the conversation as before: I drew a large circle in the middle of a blank piece of paper and wrote on the top of the page, *The problem is the problem.*

Facilitator*: If you have the opportunity to name the primary… a primary, not the primary … a significant problematic of Greensboro, how would you name it? You've got those* [index] *cards for just a little reflection.*

So you see where we are going? That was just for practice; the play was just for practice. We ***are performing Greensboro****. That is what you all do every day: you perform Greensboro; you are part of the troop that performs Greensboro. How do you name [a significant problematic]?*

<Two minutes of silence/cross talk>.

6.6.7.1 Facilitator intervention.

Even if participants used language I thought did not speak clearly to the issue, I sought as much as possible to allow the words offered to be the words that stood. The ultimate aim was to facilitate their making sense of their own lives (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). However, instead of just accepting and writing the words offered, I made an effort to elicit the users' intended understandings. Using their own words allows participants to have a strong connection with the named problematic and any resulting plans for change. It is also important to create opportunities for shared understanding of the words intended; this also allowed others to contest or offer a

different framing of the same observations. The following exchange demonstrates how as facilitator I sought to balance those two values:

***Facilitator**: How would you name a significant problematic?*
***Female Speaker #1**: Can this be something that we experienced?*
***Facilitator**: How would you name it?*
***Female Speaker #1**: "Less than me."*
***Facilitator**: Sorry?*
***Female Speaker #1**: "Less than me."*
***Facilitator**: Less than me.*
***Female Speaker #1**: Yeah.*
***Facilitator**: I don't actually know what …*
[Cross talk]
***Facilitator**: Say more about what "Less than me" actually, what that means for you.*
***Female Speaker #1**: Okay. Say "me" is White and I'm the "less," as Black less than me … You're still confused. Right?*
***Facilitator**: I don't know if I'm confused. I just, I don't want to make my meaning of it.*
***Female Speaker #1**: Yes.*
***Facilitator**: I have my own … when I hear those words, I have my own thinking about what to make it mean. I want to make sure that we are fully capturing your meaning. So I'm trying to, trying to create enough space for that. So, so is it…? Just say a little more.*
***Female Speaker #1**: Okay. I became involved with some people which the first…*
***Facilitator**: So actually, I'm trying to avoid the actual story itself.*
***Female Speaker #1**: Yeah.*
***Facilitator**: And is there a way in?*
***Female Speaker #1**: There is not really a way to--*
***Facilitator**: To capture it without?*
***Female Speaker #1**: Yeah.*
***Facilitator**: Okay, okay.*
***Female Speaker #1**: Okay. I became involved with some people, and everything went okay until it was, like they said: "You do what I say do, or else." First off, I've always been upfront about telling people I'm not a "yes" person, never have been. I've got too old to start that now. And I tried to be proven wrong.*
***Facilitator**: Okay.*

Female Speaker #1*: And you know that is to make me feel "less than me."*
Facilitator*: Okay. I think that's something everyone can understand and remember, so let's go with "less than me".*

This exchange also illustrates the principle of granular communication in that for many people the only way into meaning making is through a set of stories. While many different stories might interpret one circumstance, choosing to place the meaning of the words in that story created a range of possible meanings as well as action that could be made by both the teller and the audience.

At that point I wrote *less than me* as a spur on the outside of the circle reflecting my understanding that this was a result of a yet-to-be-named primary problematic. Recording participants' ideas is an opportunity for the facilitator's perspective to influence the direction or outcome of the conversation. It is important to record everything the participants offer, whether in the circle or on a spur, and to keep their ideas central in the conversation. For example,

Facilitator: *Perfect. You got something?*
Female Speaker #4: *I, yeah, I just think we Blacks and Whites live such separate lives in Greensboro. It's still a really segregated city, I would say, and it could be self-segregation on the part of some; I don't know, but I think historically it's a segregated city, and people are afraid to cross over. And I think until we start living together, we're never going to get together.*
Facilitator: *So would you think of segregation as a problem, or as a symptom of or response to a problem?*
Female Speaker #4: *I think it's a vicious cycle. I think it's both. But I really think people can't learn to trust each other and to like each other until they know each other. You can't know someone if you don't live near him or her. Working together is not enough. I worked at* [North Carolina] *A&T* [State University] *for several years and felt that I was relatively close to some people there, but when we went home at the end of the day, we went to opposite sides of Greensboro and didn't meet socially very much, so it's a big problem.*
Facilitator: *Going along with it. . .*

In this instance, I recorded *segregation*, *fear*, and *lack of trust* inside the circle as primary problematics, and *segregation* again outside the circle on a spur as a result. This is important to allow the participants to offer the analysis and to the extent possible avoid substituting the facilitator's voice and words for that of the participants. Yet it is important to test their thinking to allow space to think about the problem in ways that they may never have considered.

Sometimes as facilitator, I would tease out concepts to make sure that what I was recording was what the participants would want, especially if several ideas were presented or when a description of the problematic was stated with general language not sufficiently distinguishing from among many different possible understandings. The following two exchanges demonstrate facilitator action to tease out and clarify concepts. In each exchange both participants describe a significant problematic in ways that the initial words used for naming the problematic – *lie* and *duplicitousness* – could be understood later as synonymous. When speakers use same or similar words that could have similar meanings, but they are hoping to convey different ideas, it can result in conflict and impedes making shared meaning together. In this instance a granular inquiry that places the concept inside a particular narrative stream is helpful to add texture to each of the namings. This is the practical foundation for much of the work of narrative mediation (Drewery & Windslade, 1997). Use of the same or similar words to relay different concepts is also reflective of a later comment that another participant offered, when she said, "[W]e don't have a good vocabulary for this work."

A facilitator intervention that can avoid this communication challenge is to elicit the narrative backdrop for a word use, so that distinctions become clear (Drewery & Windslade, 1997). Both exchanges show the value of granular communication informed inquiry. By slowing the process down enough to allow participants to wrestle with the complex narrative stream used to make meaning, nuanced words or phrases can be found to better convey the experience to which they seek to give voice. Exploration of the narrative stream also creates opportunities for participants to unpack their own thoughts by examining all the sources that inform how they make meaning.

EXCHANGE # 1

> ***Male Speaker #4:*** *And I'm about to get deep here, okay, so work with me, 'cause the word that's probably in my mind is "duplicitous."*

Facilitator: *Duplicitous.*

Male Speaker #4: *Okay, and we have to talk about that, because Greensboro says, "We're not like the rest of North Carolina and the South. We're a progressive city," and they're going through all of this … I mean I think there is a progressive history here too, and I don't want to knock it, but I had a story earlier. I've been to Friendly Center, and I stood at a checkout counter for half an hour and nobody would acknowledge it … But in this progressive city people talk about entitlement because of race, because of their education, or whatever, makes me sick. Okay, and so we got to fix that. See now when I go home and put on my jeans and my beat up sneakers, I don't get any respect - zero. Because seeing I'm just another Black man? And so you could meet someone at Lowe's or whatever and get into a discussion, and their reaction to you is* [exaggerated facial expression of surprise]*: "Well, you could speak. You're making sense. You're not tripping over the noun/verb agreement." Well, who are you? Who do you think you are? You don't belong to the entitled group in this community, right? And I think we dance around that all the time. So for me the reason I come here today is because I can indulge in intelligent conversations with people who would listen. Probably listen beyond my ratings or my gender, but who will listen honestly. But that doesn't happen a lot of places in the society, and I talk to a lot of people. At the police department we were talking about that earlier, you know, on all levels from chief on down. I talk to city council members, I go to inside prisons, I talk to the inmates, and I talk to prisoners and workers about this stupid jail. And there is the sense of entitlement, because I'm White, because I think I had more education than you or because I come from the right pedigree,* [that] *I can just make decisions for other people behind me.*

Facilitator: *So that sounded like a lot more than just "duplicitousness". There were multiple ideas in there. So I'm trying to make sure I don't miss all of them. What else is there?*

Male Speaker #4: *You're not going to charge me a fee for this, right?*

{Group Laughter}

Facilitator: *Tonight is free.*

{More Group Laughter}

Male Speaker #4: *Tonight is free, yeah. There may be a lot of things, but I want to focus on this duplicity.*

Facilitator: *So then let me just unpack it just a little bit. Okay? Duplicitousness – this is to suggest that there are multiple stories about Greensboro.*
Male Speaker #4: *Yeah, there are multiple stories.*
Facilitator: *There is a story that you want to put in the airport when you get off the plane.*
Male Speaker #4: *A story that you want to put in the airport when you get off the plane, right? And there's a story about, you know, 1979* [the Greensboro "massacre"]*, which we don't want to deal with. Okay. There is a story about people sleeping under the trestles and bridges here. But no, we want to talk about* [the biogenetics lab at] *Center City Park.*
Female Speaker #4: *I want to talk about what brings economic vibrancy to this community, so we paint that picture.*
Facilitator: *Let me check something with you. If that story were, if that other story … "Center City Park" and all those other points … if that story actually reflected your experience, would you want to tell that story? Would you want to live in a place where that story actually was true?*
Female Speaker #4: *Absolutely.*
Male Speaker #4: *Sure.*
Facilitator: *Okay.*
Male Speaker #4: *But I'm tired of being invisible. So I think it, yeah, because that's been an issue for certain people in this society, right? You're here, but you're not here. You're here, but you're not counted. You're here, but we don't want to hear your voice. Okay. We want you to stay in the background. You know, and part of, now I'm getting too ideological here, but I mean, you read some people like Fanon, who says, "There has to be some kind of catharsis." There was one in this play, where* [Will Etta] *said "No!" Now, Fanon would say violence is the way you become visible, and a lot of people do that. You know, but there are different ways, but that's part of the script. But there are people in this community who the entitled people want to keep invisible.*

6.6.7.2 Facilitator Intervention – Deconstructive Listening

As facilitator, I do not attempt to determine the outcome of the conversation, but an important role the facilitator plays is in the deconstruction of the stories being told. Drewery and Winslade (1997) state that "Problems are products of discourse

which have placed the person in problematic positions in the story she is telling about her life" (p. 41). Conflict-saturated narratives are told with such tightly connected structure that there is limited room for either the teller or the audience to reconceptualize or reinterpret the experience (Cobb, 2013). Narrative work draws attention to the process of meaning making in ways that allow space for new openings for action. In any given story, meaning is made by the observations and interpretations included in the telling, as well as by those that are not included. "Derrida pointed out that in order for words to have meaning, we must be able to distinguish that meaning from what is not" (Drewery & Winslade, 1997, p. 43). The process of distinguishing the "what is" from the "what is not" is part of deconstructive listening.

Deconstruction is a central act of narrative decompression (Cobb, 2013) and disarming the power of a conflict-saturated story (Winslade & Monk, 2008). To remember why this is so, we are reminded of the way that discourse works. Discourse has a dual operational effect. It includes and excludes at the same time. Derrida points out that what is present in discourse requires the "absent trace" of that which is excluded in order to maintain its boundaries. Foucault reminds us that "discourse transmits and produces power, it reinforces it, but it also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). "Deconstruction is the process of taking apart or looking beyond the taken-for-granted meanings and common sense explanations … to locate their origins in the social context" (Harker, 1997). Deconstruction often happens through questioning, "Why does it have to be that way?" (Harker, 1997, p. 195).

My intervention in response to the story above was an effort to identify the edges of discourse and to have the storyteller notice for himself how his crafting of the story includes and excludes points of information that result in a particularly constrained positioning of himself in the story. The immediate response to this intervention demonstrates the power of deconstruction: the storyteller offers language that explicitly states the position he was offered – invisibility, lack of agency, or even non-presence – in the complex weaving of discourses that comprise the dominant community narrative.

This invisibility to which the speaker refers is the *precarity* that Butler (2009) conceptualized as being even more significant a concern than subjectification in

terms of the role of power in identity formation. When a person is made subject through an interpellation, he or she is made subject and that subjectivity is constrained by the terms of the calling (Althusser, 1971; Butler, 1997a; 2009). The condition of *precarity* occurs when the person has not been interpellated and thereby fails to exist as a subject under any terms (Butler, 2009). The exchange above also demonstrates the value added of the narrative restorative community conferencing method for eliciting the form and content of analysis that could contribute to radical – meaning at the root – community transformation. By effectively naming the problematic and not simply the emotions performed in response to it, the individual and community are much better positioned to develop an effective action strategy and find either individual or collective lines of flight that move away from the already and always trajectory of the dominant narrative.

While the next speaker was beginning to talk, I wrote *duplicitousness* in the circle. On the spur I wrote *invisibility*. My sense was that there were many other ideas that could be captured. To limit facilitator influence on the outcome of the conversation, I only wrote the comments that the participant asked to highlight.

The conversation continued with the next exchange. This exchange also required a similar facilitator intervention to have the speaker expand and restate words and unpack several narrative streams informing the meaning of the simple terms he first offered, so that his multiple and textured meanings could all be unveiled.

EXCHANGE # 2

Male Speaker #1*: I'm really into simplicity. And there is, I think, a lie of this community.* [This was also an effort of discursive self-positioning. This speaker positioned himself in relationship to the previous speaker's comments who had characterized the remarks he was planning to offer as "getting deep"].

Facilitator*: There's a…?*

Male Speaker #1*: A lie of this community: that Greensboro is one thing, and Greensboro is another thing in reality. And I think that there is something anti-aspirational about Greensboro, and that those who aspire to change it run into … are instantly labeled trouble-makers. And the work of changing becomes so hard that you ultimately, you get worn down. I've seen that from a lot of people who I admire in this community. That to engage in confronting the lie, to engage in dreaming of*

something better, wears people down. And I see this in people I respect, generations of people I respect in this community … I see weariness. That's heartbreaking.

[Cross talk of audible affirmation or agreement among many participants.]

Male Speaker #1*: I was just at a conference in New York, and people are like, "Greensboro has this great progressive record." And I'm like, "Mmmm".*

Here, I reflect back what the speaker was saying by trying to connect it to as many of the earlier comments as possible.

Facilitator: *And so there is a, there is an image of the city* that was being constructed for public consumption* which doesn't necessarily align with a reality that many people live in Greensboro. And there are ways in which protecting that image* is really significant and important. So that if, in fact, you bump up against it in certain ways, you can either be, you said, I think, punished* for confronting the lie, or isolated*, silenced*, which is also what you [Male Speaker #4] were saying made invisible,* there's an apathy* that results. And it may well be that in service of that image,* segregation* and separation* and silos* are really important, because if we all got together and spent too much time together and started comparing notes, we might notice that the image itself didn't have what it promises. And so you say, "There is a lie of this community."**

My reflection and summary here links several of the previous namings of the problematic to begin to show how the descriptions the participants were offering were not separate and distinct, but in fact, all part of a larger more textured narrative.[30] As I restated each comment, I pointed to the diagram developing in front of the participants. To tease out and clarify what one participant was offering, I sought to connect her/his comments to what several others had offered previously. This interim summary also builds momentum while seeking additional comments. The conversation continued:

[30] . The **"*"**s inside the facilitator reflection above are points at which I make direct references to comments recorded as part of the mapping process. See Figures VI.3 and VI.4

> ***Male Speaker #1****: And I think also that Greensboro does it so cleverly because it isn't as blatantly ugly as it is in some other places. So if Atlanta is "the city too busy to hate," then we are "the city too polite to bother". And that we get away with a pretense that is long as, that would be very, it's very easy for a certain group of people to live within that pretense.*
>
> ***Male Speaker #4****: And let's be clear about this. There are many Blacks in this community who feel they are entitled. Right? And buy into these and say to, you know, all these troublemakers, "Don't rock the boat. It's good here, you know".*

At the end of this exchange, I wrote in the circle *lie of community* and *protect image*. On the spurs, I wrote *anti-aspirational*, *city too polite to bother*, *weariness*, and *labeling with arrows pointing to isolation*, *segregation*, and *invisibility*. (See Figure VI.4.)

6.7 Mapping

In the process of mapping a problematic, it is easy for the specific problematics to get lost. If the question asked is just a generic inquiry about the types of conditions that are the result of the many problematics, then there might be a general naming. In this instance it is important to map the problematics by identifying specific problematics that have been named and then ask for specific examples of the effects of each one. It can be argued (persuasively) that the problematics form a complex interweaving, and therefore, it would be impossible to highlight a specific outcome that is solely the result of any one single problematic condition. Even so, it is important to have participants give personal texture to their experience by seeking to draw the connections.

That being said, even when participants are invited to share, there is still space for the facilitator to challenge and tease out the mapping, and so there are certain facilitator interventions that help shape the outcome of this type of conversation.

6.7.1 Facilitator intervention – Double listening.

One particularly important mode of narrative intervention is to offer a double listening by identifying the "absent but implicit" storyline in the speaker's offering (White, 2000). This form of listening helps the speaker to notice that their meaning making is contained both in what they do and what they do not say (Winslade & Monk, 2008, pp. 9-10). This also allows them to test the edges of the containers in

which their meanings are constructed and stored. Most often, meaning making does not occur fully - in the present; rather, present meanings are informed both by stories from the narrator's personal experience and by stories passed on to them from the cultural narratives, myths, and archetypes that inform their view of the world. Also, meanings are made by excluding possible other meanings. When other possible meanings that have been excluded involve the speaker adopting a position of increased agency, noticing this feature of the narration opens new horizons for action.

The following is an example of such an occasion. During the naming process in the analysis of the play, a story was told and affirmed by several other participants. The story was not based on an available observation, but rather on a historical and cultural narrative deeply woven inside the narrative tissue of the dominant narrative of the Greensboro community.

> ***Facilitator:*** *So let me just do this for just a second … What were some of the results of these problems when this oppression, or the absence of equality, the misrepresentation, possibly based on conventional views, or the archetypes, misappropriation, the demands of the system, the fear, the lack of trust, the ego, the pain … just map it for me. What were some of the things that have come about? What were some of the results of that? If these are the problems, then we get a chance to see what are some of the results? What are some of the ways that these problems actually showed up in the play?*
>
> ***Male Speaker #5****: A good successful play typically relies upon, whether the cast can pass the ball, can pass lines that are fun, and they are great to work together and [the way distrust effected this play is that], that was broken in a lot of ways. As a result, the play potentially suffers not the sense of an ideal play … there's distrust from the cast. It creates some horrible moments on stage.*
>
> ***Facilitator****: Okay. So distrust. Give me one example of where the distrust actually showed up.*
>
> ***Male Speaker #5****: Well certainly, the director went with his other crew into the back room to have the power conversations.*
>
> ***Facilitator****: Okay.*
>
> ***Male Speaker #9****: Which made a big statement to say, "You all are the problem." I mean he used a lot of that language, and it's just devastating to trust.*

***Facilitator**: Just out of curiosity, do you know what conversation actually happened in that back room?*

***Male Speaker #9**: Based on what they shared prior to going into that room, I feel like 80 percent.*

***Facilitator**: But because you have an expectation of what's there, and we decide and we fill it in. 'Cause it could also be that he went to the back room and just completely fell apart, saying, "I cannot believe that my big break is falling apart on me!* [He could have a] *break down* [and then say] *I have no idea what to do! I'm going to need a moment to regroup, can you all go home. I'll call you tomorrow"?*

***Male Speaker #5**: Or he could have said, "I've been a racist jerk my whole life! Oh, my God! I'm going to come back and go…"*

***Facilitator**:* {interrupting the speaker} *All right, good. Male Speaker #7, give me an example of where pain showed up; there was pain inviting somebody to do something or say something or be in a certain way?* [this speaker had originally identified 'pain' as a problematic, so I asked him specifically to map the issue he had named.]

***Male Speaker #7**: Well, a lot in the older Black woman's voice … her voice says so much in and of itself. But I'm just thinking about this instance of my understanding of what happened when he went back in the room, was, he was saying something like, to his buddy. He went back to the room with him: "Look, I can't handle these people. In other words, it is too painful for me. I can't handle these people. You have got to go out there and do something about it," which in effect, kept the power structure going.*

***Facilitator:** So I want to notice something for just a second. Is there any indication of what that conversation was in the back room*? [Pointing to the director of the play] *Is it even in the script?*

***Male Speaker #3**: No.*

***Facilitator**: No. So one of the things that happens that we do is, we make it up.*

***Female Speaker# 7**: Exactly.*

***Facilitator**: The conversation that we are imagining is happening back there is a conversation that we imagine happens based on our relationship with and among those characters. So, we actually make it up. I'm wondering whether the conversation that we create that happened in the back room was also a reflection of a lack of trust. Or like, we do not actually trust that type of guy. We know that that's what*

they do when they get to back rooms. That's our lack of trust; we have a sense of what the demands of a capitalist system* are, or we have a certain fear.* We might even have a race and gender archetypes* that will make this White man who was in charge the kind of guy that would go* [to the] *back room and do that kind of stuff. Right? So we make that up.*

Male Speaker #7*: But I can argue…*

Male Speaker #9*: Yeah, we can argue with you.*

Male Speaker #7*: I would argue the whole structure of the play says that is what he's talking about in the back room.*

Male Speaker #9*: Right.*

Male Speaker #4*: History tells us that if it is meant to be… you know. See that's where the history thing comes in. You know, somewhere in our memory… You say* [pointing to his own head]*, "Hey, yeah, my grandma told me about this. So you know, I told you some of that stuff before." You know, so we fill in our life when we see it happening somewhere else.*

Facilitator*: Right. That's good, so history, the shared history and all of the pain, the fear, and the archetypes that show up to cause us to do that. Okay, was there any place in the play, because this isn't the totality of what was happening in the play?*

Figure VI .3 Mapping Trouble in Mind

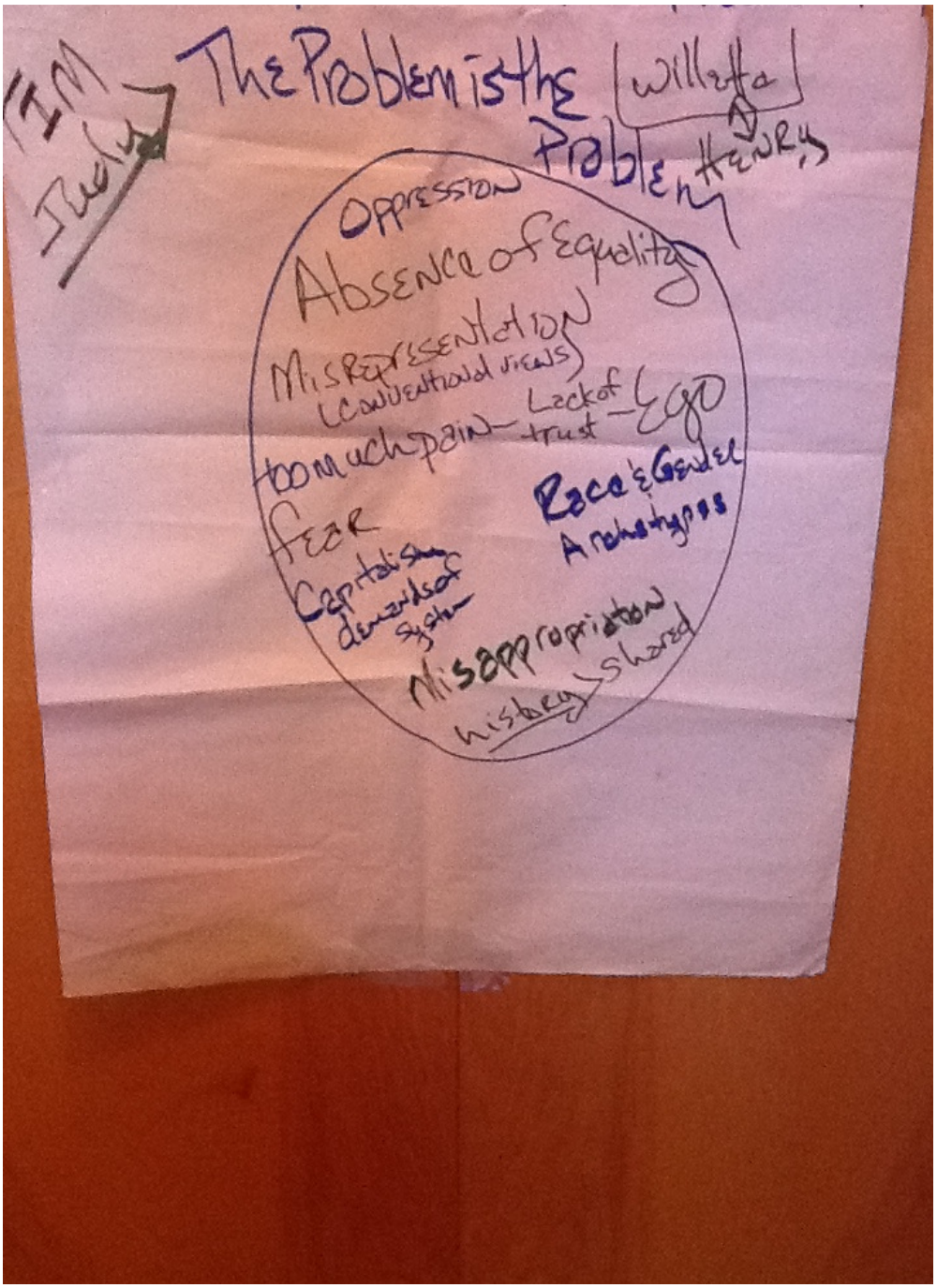
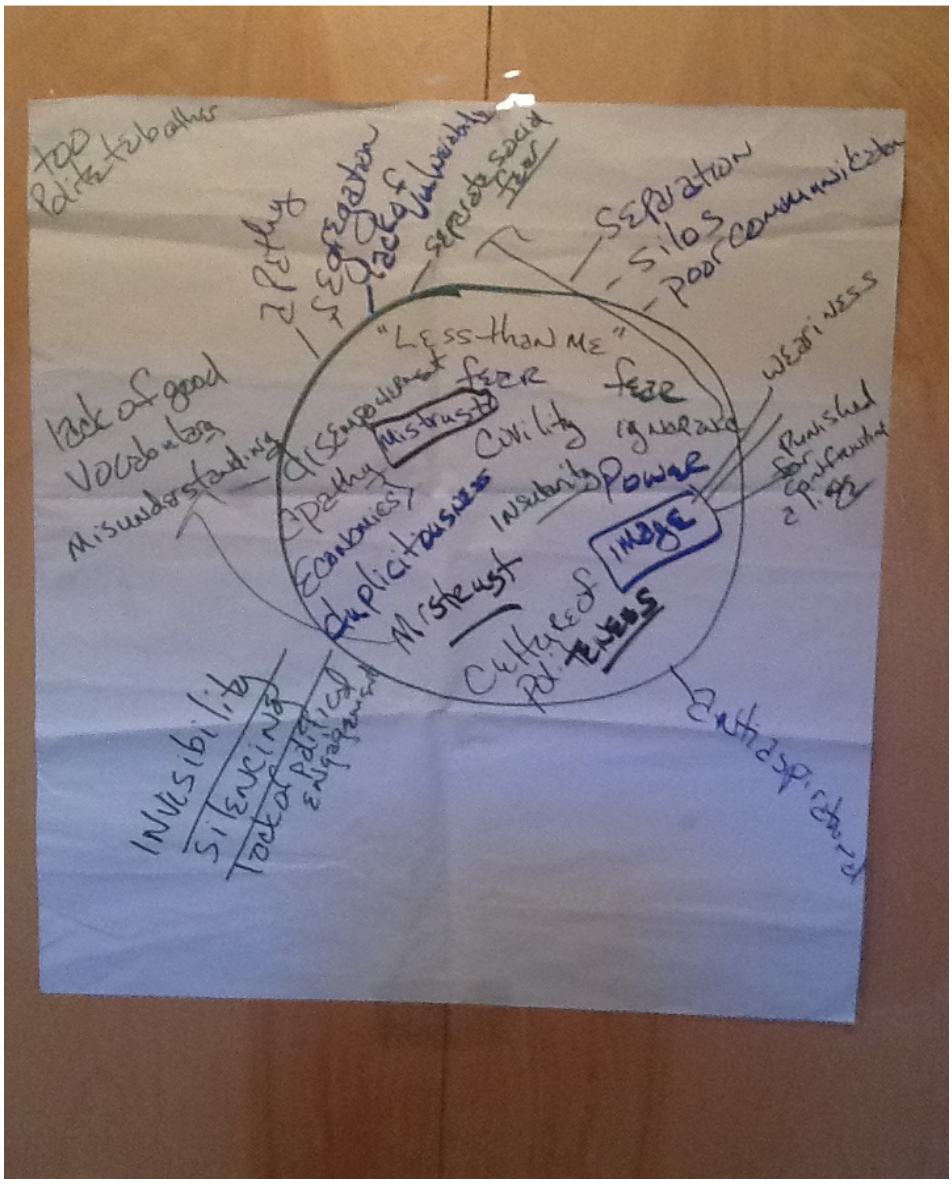


Fig VI .4 - Greensboro Mapping



A major aspect of narrative mediation is helping participants pay attention to the places where they treat an interpretation as a reality. Drewery and Winslade (1997) point out that, "The stories we tell come to be the 'natural' state of the world – the way the world is. Often this kind of sense making becomes a credo – the standard by which all other stories about the same phenomena are told and the basis of judgments about what is right and what is not. Our stories can blind us to other possibilities." (p. 42) Similarly, a major aspect of granular communication is to slow down the conversation and deconstruct its smallest components. It is also important for the facilitator to deconstruct the *as if* quality of a story that is affirmed as reality by so many participants – especially when the story positions the entire group as having limited agency. In this instance the facilitator could help participants notice where the interpretation of events was derived from historically told narratives. A full exploration of the granular communication process would also invite speakers to notice where they are positioned in the stories they use to make meaning of particular observations and to ask whether there are other stories equally accessible to them but which offer a more agentic position. The preceding is an example of an exchange in which the *as if real* quality of a central portion of the dominant narrative was challenged by the facilitator, but affirmed and reinforced by many participants. The end of the exchange signals the possibility of an opening to shift positions or understandings in relationship to that particular story.

6.7.2 Building a complete and textured conflict-saturated narrative.

As in the previous exchange where I sought to connect comments that had been offered previously, I also restated later in the conversation the connected narrative, both to maintain momentum and to test the resonance of the story the participants were developing. When the entire narrative is given in totality as opposed to isolated comments and singular descriptions, participants have an opportunity to notice whether the full story is an accurate and complete representation of their lived experiences. In this case, I would have expected comments following the summation to affirm the developing narrative and continue in that direction. If the narrative were not fully resonant with their lived experience (or if the totality was too stark to accept or if it lacked authenticity), I would expect the participants to challenge it or balance it with comments to redirect the

developing narrative. In this instance, the comments following my summary seemed to affirm the developing narrative.

> ***Facilitator:*** *There's fear, possibly some ignorance, and mistrust. There's the duplicitousness around the image of a progressive mystique. And if you confront that, then there's a pushback of the whole power structure that seeks to preserve a particular image. And so there's a weariness that comes from that. This mistrust, insularity, the power, the fear results, and some of the things that it produces, are: separation, silos, ineffective communication, separate social spheres, an unwillingness or a lack of tolerability of others, a kind of segregation, an apathy, a whole community that's "too polite to bother" with some of these concerns. Some of this … you know, the fear, the mistrust, the inability to connect … also results in a lack of a good vocabulary for relating to and continuing to process this stuff, so there is continuing misunderstanding that says to some people that you are "less than me." And then there are certain groups for whom silencing, a lack of political engagement and even invisibility are the result; and all this creates a kind of an anti-aspirational atmosphere to some extent.*
>
> ***Male Speaker #4:*** *That's good.*
>
> ***Female Speaker #7:*** *I just think that sums it up.*
>
> [Group Laughter]
>
> ***Female Speaker #7:*** *It's something* [indiscernible]*… that you could put up a whole website.*
>
> [More Group Laughter]

Here, it seems that the group response was both an affirmation of the accuracy of the narrative and a resonance with what they had developed as a full and textured statement of the conflict-saturated narrative of their community. A few more comments were offered to fill out the naming process, and then I again summarized the naming as part of the transition from mapping to identifying unique alternatives:

> ***Facilitator:*** *So I think that … and you all have already started talking about it … you were connecting to a number of different examples of what happens, and if we were taking more time, we would spend time, and I would invite you to say for yourself when is a time where you had a possible opportunity to cross a boundary to engage somebody who you would otherwise not engage? And what is it that fear invites you to do or not do in those moments? How is it that mistrust speaks to you in certain*

> *moments where you would, you know, that they might cause you to shift your behavior, cause you to take a different trajectory? How is it that your awareness of the culture of politeness or the intention to maintain a specific imagery … how is it that your awareness of that shifts how you engage others? But I'm sure that we will have some … everybody has some examples of how that works in the community and your individual lives. Probably you could map that. And you can map that in your professional life, in your social sphere, and in your personal life. You could map how fear related to economics or mistrust or a sense of disempowerment or this need to protect an image or the culture of politeness, how that has impacts on you? You get it? Is everybody feeling pretty comfortable that you could do that? If we were spending time with that, you can map that.*

At this point, I transitioned the process from problem mapping to *reverse mapping*. Reverse mapping involves identifying the outcomes or results first and then seeking to uncover the conditions that make those results possible. This is the reverse of the first phase, which is naming the problematic and then noticing what those problems produce. In many instances, it is more accessible for participants to notice the unique outcome as opposed to asking first for qualities that do not align with the dominant narrative. After identifying unique outcomes, participants were invited through the reverse mapping process to notice qualities and conditions that were, in fact, present, but often overlooked, even in the midst of the dominant narrative that grips their lives.

6.8 Reverse Mapping

{PROCESS NOTE: In order to clear a space for visualization of an alternative narrative that wouldn't get immediately overwhelmed by or confused with the dominant narrative that the group had just fully developed, I removed from the easel pad the page with the dominant narrative map and taped it on the lower half of the easel; I then drew a large circle in the middle of a blank page.}

> ***Facilitator:*** *What I wonder is … and I happen to know that it's true because of all the people that are sitting in the room … are there examples in Greensboro, are there sufficient examples of when the culture of civility, or fear, or the politeness, does not control? Where the need to maintain the image, the duplicitousness, the sense of economic control, or the history associated with that … Do you all have examples*

in Greensboro that you can point to where those are not the actual controlling factors? Are there ways to say, "Well, this is the place where people have actually pushed past fear to engage one another. This is the place where people were willing to disregard the culture of politeness on behalf of something, or they were able to act even in the space of fear or get beyond ignorance." Do you have some examples of that?

A typical reverse mapping exchange is reflected below:

Male Speaker #7*: You know, we've been, for the last eight months, having dialogues between the undocumented immigrant population and the police department. There are all sorts of cultural reasons, and this is one of the nastiest conflicts in the state of North Carolina. And there's tremendous fear and mistrust. If you're an undocumented person, if you get pulled over on the way to get milk for your child, and you don't have that driver's license because you can't get one in North Carolina, you get pulled over without an ID, you're going to jail. Your fingerprints … they maybe share it with the FBI … and if it turns out that you're undocumented, the next thing you know, you're detained and deported. Those stakes are huge and mistrust is huge there, but we had these relationships that put kind of over eight months in sacred space. And all of a sudden, you have undocumented folks that in some cases are going out to eat with some of the officers, and they're laughing together, and coming up after the service to the assistance chief and saying, "I'm undocumented." Being safe in that space in saying that and saying, "But save space for me on the police force, because it's been my dream since I was a boy." That's good stuff.*

Facilitator*: That's good stuff! So what allows that to happen? What's the thing that allows that to happen?*

Male Speaker #7*: Time, willingness to stick with the relationships, even those that we see awkward silence. Forgiveness, some people can even say some things that are offensive, listening skills, the willingness to be vulnerable, but also from that, to eat together. And over six to eight months, if you stick with it, are willing to be with and forgive one another, give each other a little bit of grace.*

Female Speaker #3*: And a good facilitator.* [Group Laughter]

Female Speaker #4*: Well, I was going to say, "And add a new person like [Speaker #7] to the mix."*

Female Speaker #3*: Well, it doesn't have to be new.*

> ***Female Speaker #4****: It has to be a new person who, quite frankly, doesn't know a whole lot of history that we're talking about, to simply go about and do that kind of thing that is new, unique, different, creative, and create a space with which fruition occurs.*
> ***Facilitator****: Does it have to be a new person to …*
> ***Female Speaker #3****: He has the right skills and is smart, and I can go on and on, but knows the ingredients that need to happen to create a safe space for that conversation to happen. Well, I don't see why it has to be somebody that's new. You could have the history. The question is what you do with the history to move forward.*

The naming of unique outcomes continued apace for about half as long as the problem-naming portion. In a full community engagement experience – in contrast to the experience in this test application of the model – identification of unique outcomes that seed alternative stories could take as much, if not more, time than problem naming. Often, the dominant discourse is so readily available and all-consuming that the alternatives are more difficult to give voice to (Winslade & Monk, 2008). Throughout the reverse mapping process, I continued to elicit examples and then unpack each by having the participants name the qualities and conditions that supported a particular outcome.

6.9 Choosing a Preferred Narrative

After development of a well-textured, alternative narrative with multiple examples of unique outcomes, it was essential to invite the participants to state a preference among the available narratives. Performance in community and relational patterns are often done out of habit. The previous activity had demonstrated that there were clearly at least two narratives operating in the community. If the story that a person lives into shapes their behavior, it is important for participants to recognize that they have the capacity to live into a narrative that supports the lived experience that they desire. Requiring a stated preference among the available narratives invites a level of intentionality needed to overcome the habitual patterns behind the dominant narrative.

In many cases, including this one, the group responds to the question of narrative preference as though there is only one natural and obvious choice. Once they have unveiled the unique outcomes this becomes the *obvious* choice of narratives. Unique outcomes occur in places where people are affirmed as

courageous and bold and making significant contributions. As facilitator, I pressed this point to test whether the *choice* was so obvious, and, if so, why was the *obvious choice* not the dominant narrative? It is in the space between the obvious choice and failure to choose it on a regular or habitual basis that a platform for community action can be established.

> ***Facilitator****: I recognize how much time we have spent tonight. What I would like to do now is invite you to look at these two stories, because both of these stories are actually present in your community. There is a story of Greensboro that is about mistrust, fear, how civility and a culture of politeness, duplicitousness, the drive of economics result in disempowerment, apathy, insularity, the protection of an image where people are punished for confronting the lie. They grow weary. They are invisible. They are silenced. There is a lack of a good vocabulary. There's apathy, segregation, an unwillingness to be vulnerable. There is poor communications, and people… even those in the liberal class … operate in silos. That is a story that is available about Greensboro. We tell it all the time and you live into it and perform it every day when you get up and you walk outside.*
>
> *And there's also a story in Greensboro where people take time. They persevere. They create a space for grace, forgiveness, and vulnerability. There's a leadership that allows for the creation of safe spaces, where trust can be built with cross-boundary interactions. There's a way in which people don't operate out of their history, where they've created opportunities for shared work and responsibility, bridging across communities, confronting economic barriers with people from many different communities who care more about friendship than they do about politics. There are many people who have not forgotten the ethic of love, and they've been able to build alliances across a wide spectrum to make common good. That story also exists in Greensboro.*
>
> *Do you all have a preference?* [Group laughter]
>
> ***Facilitator****: But it's actually the case that we have to make a choice. Why? Because you have a <u>choice</u>, you have to actually have a <u>preference</u>. You have to actually act on a preference because this story* [pointing to the chart of the dominant narrative]*, I just want to suggest to you, is a really powerful story, and it seems to be the choice made out of habit or in response to fear and apathy and power. Fear will speak to you in some ways that you will feel bad about when you go home, because you know you operate with a sense of fear and mistrust. It may even get to*

the point where you have, because of your own commitment to economics or the economic survival, you know, the care for your children and others who you're responsible for, you will adhere to the culture of politeness, and you will actually support and reproduce the civility and even notice the image or the lie and not confront it, knowing that you may be punished for confronting it. That story is present for us. It's available. And you get to make that choice. This is a conversation that is also available [pointing to the alternative narrative]*, and yet conversations disappear. If you don't have the structural supports that allow this conversation* [alternative] *to survive, to thrive until it becomes the more, the dominant conversation, until this available* [pointing to the alternative story] *becomes a dominant discourse, there has to be structure created to reinforce it, and this conversation is always available* [pointing to the dominant discourse] *and is constantly working to defeat that one. Right?*

Male Speaker #6*: Is this* conversation [pointing to the problem-naming graphic]*, the one we have when we're separated from each other and basically isolated, and this conversation* [pointing to the mapping of unique outcomes] *we have when we're working together?*

Facilitator*: Well, not necessarily. It could be that when you all are operating together* [pointing to the alternative story], *mistrust* [pointing to the dominant narrative chart] *is still a significant part of that conversation. You can work together and still have creeping into that space some sense of mistrust or a refusal of vulnerability and just say, "We're just working. We don't need to be vulnerable. We don't need to know each other. We don't need to actually break bread, be companions, do all that kind of stuff. We just have a job to do together." Right? Which is this conversation* [dominant narrative] *overwhelming the opportunity of that one* [alternative].

Facilitator*: And create a space for grace and forgiveness in those moments where this other story overtakes us because it's a habit. The story that you live into is a habit. If you just practice doing certain things, you have a certain practice; you have certain patterns. And so even when you all commit to living inside of this* [alternative story] *story, there will be times when that's the one that shows up. And how do you create an ethic, a space, a practice of grace, forgiveness, alliance, and also how do you become integrity meters for one another, where you get to say, "I know we've committed to this* [alternative] *conversation, and I*

know that in that particular moment, this [dominant narrative] *was the conversation we were operating in. I just want to invite you back to this other conversation, and know that you're always welcome in this other conversation, even in the space of that." How do you all create that together?*

Male Speaker #7: *Were you leading us to this all this time?* [Laughter] *Yeah, I really do think he's a great teacher to get us here …*

Facilitator *I'm just inviting you all into a … I'm just trying to figure out how we get the infrastructure you need to notice, name, and nurture this conversation?*

6.10 Preferred Narrative Becomes the Platform for Community Action

The alternative narrative is now set up as the platform for a conversation about community action and engagement. The idea of living into a story becomes the metaphoric platform to design any future community action. It will take a much longer study and fuller conversation with a more diverse representation of the community to build a full community action agenda. However, it seems that this approach to narrative has allowed issues of race, ethnicity, and class to be discussed in a non-divisive manner, resulting in a platform upon which to build action.

The advantage of a narrative platform for action is that action plans will incorporate every level of relationship – personal narrative, relational exchange, systemic and institutional patterns, and even background narratives and discursive threads. This is so because the community narrative has incorporated all these issues in both the dominant and alternative narratives. In the next chapter, I will show, through an analysis of content, how the conversations produced an excellent description of the operation of relations of power and discursive forces in the community. The power/ knowledge analysis shown in the next chapter, which includes the unveiling of the operative discursive and recursive forces, and the illumination of instrumental modes of power, place participants in a better position to design effective community transformation strategies.

After the naming, mapping, and reverse mapping processes were completed to the extent time permitted, there were a summation and talk of next steps. While the next steps would advance the larger participatory action research effort, this concluded the narrative research effort. This group in various configurations continued to meet for more than twelve months after this process continued.

Eventually, they designed a community wide dialogue process and began to seek funding to address an issue of immediate and widespread significance in most sectors of the community – how to establish a public safety apparatus for the community that provided protection in such a manner than all segments of the community felt both protected and welcome.

6.11 Closure

As a means of seeking closure in this process, each participant was invited to share a very brief reflection about the process and the next steps.

> ***Facilitator****: So what Mary Louise and I have been doing is gathering in a variety of different ways, thoughts, information, perspectives about Greensboro, to some extent the entire Triad, but primarily Greensboro … And our intention is to continue using this information … We don't have a specific process design or something in our head already. A lot of that would be invitational with a lot of your help. And so that's just what we're up to at this point. I just want to appreciate … this was really good work tonight. I don't know if you all are tired, but you did a lot of work. And I just want to point that out and to thank you. I want to thank you all for your openness, your willingness to be vulnerable, to trust in this space, operate from a place where you allow yourself to see yourselves, and to be powerful enough and hopeful enough to actually contribute to the conversation.*
>
> [Group cross talk]
>
> ***Facilitator:*** [to Male Speaker #5] *I need to thank you again for bringing that play into the mix, and to the extent that I can encourage you, give you affirmation to keep doing that, keep those conversations. I just certainly want to just encourage you to keep going back to some really rich contributions of what happens here in the community. And I wonder if anybody has anything that they really want to say, something really important that you want to say before you leave, to make it feel like, okay, something that is occurring for you like, "I didn't want to leave without having said this."*
>
> ***Facilitator****: What would we do? What would be a ritual closure that would send us off well? Anybody have a thought? I know that with all these process folks …*
>
> ***Female Speaker #7****: Possibly a round with one word?*
>
> ***Facilitator****: Perfect.*
>
> ***Female Speaker #7****: I don't know how that sounds …*

Facilitator*: It's okay. And the word is in response to?*
Female Speaker #7*: The evening or the total experience.*
Facilitator*: Perfect.*
Male Speaker #7: Female Speaker #7?
Female Speaker #7*: I'd like to start.* [Laughter]
Female Speaker #7*: Rewarded.*
Female Speaker #3*: It's possible.*
Male Speaker #6*: Inspired.*
Male Speaker #7*: Improvement.*
Female Speaker #4*: Overall satisfied.*
Female Speaker #8*: Curious.*
Male Speaker #7*: Appreciative.*
Male Speaker #1*: Together.*
Male Speaker# 4*: And the greatest of these is love.*
Female Speaker #2*: I'll go with hopeful.*
Female Speaker #3*: Happy.*
Female Speaker #1*: Grateful.*
Facilitator*: Really excited. Thank you all so much.*
All: Thank you*.*

[Applause … Cross talk … End of recording]

6.12 Future Refinement of the Process

A way to give even more texture and nuance to the naming process might be to create a space and allot time for story sharing, where people tell their experience in detail to other participants who might be unfamiliar with those experiences. This is especially important in a community narration process because, unlike the confines of the play, there is not a limited set of observations that all parties could share and analyze together. In a community, especially one that is segregated, where different groups are isolated as a result of or as a basis for fear, misinformation and mistrust, it is likely that those different groups would not have a shared set of observations upon which to base the naming and mapping processes. An opportunity for shared storytelling and some dialogic experience would develop an even thicker description and richer texture from which to build. This would be true for both the problematic naming and mapping process as well as the process of identifying the unique alternatives.

6.13 Performing Greensboro

As discussed in Chapter V, one of the greatest challenges in applying the dialogue model to historical and diverse societal conflicts lies in the differences between a diffuse, undefined range of observations that make up a community and a direct and discreet set of observations in regard to a play (or in an act of school discipline). A notable challenge for naming and mapping the problematics of a community is that participants can offer observations and descriptions with more freedom to incorporate their own individual interpretations. It is much more difficult to separate out the observation from the value judgment and interpretation when the participants do not have shared experiences. This lack of shared observation points highlights the need for an extended storytelling process when using this approach in the future. Ultimately, I believe that this approach can be effectively applied under these circumstances when facilitators pay close attention to certain features of the process.

6.14 Why Narrative Restorative Community Conferencing, and not Truth and Reconciliation Commissions?

Restorative justice processes, such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs), have been used at the community level when communities have been violently divided across some socially constructed category over a period of time. TRCs used to address large societal divisions in large-scale settings have had mixed results. Two features of TRCs limit their potential in a setting like Greensboro, NC, and those two features can be characterized as the *immediate future* and the *immediate past*.

With regard to the *immediate future*, in most modern instances and applications of TRCs, the TRC is conducted in conjunction with a transitional governing process. In South Africa, for instance, there was a change of governmental structures from White minority rule under apartheid to Black African majority rule. Similarly, the TRCs in Rwanda, Liberia, Chile, Peru, and Sierra Leone were all implemented in anticipation of a total change in governance structures and leadership. The transitioning governance provides the hope, and even promise, that certain justice issues, particularly economic and political justice questions such as inclusion and voice, will be addressed by the new, favorable governing (some say *power*) structure. Such issues can be, and indeed were, ignored as part of the

restorative process. In Greensboro after the 1979 events, there was no intention or realistic possibility of changing the model of governance. There might have been a groundswell of political participation that resulted in a wholesale change in the priorities of the individuals elected to hold the offices. However, the governing structures would not change in terms of models of participation and economic factors and those structures had been designed in support of and with the capacity to reproduce and stabilize a certain discursively framed set of relationships between government and private sector interests. It would be an uphill challenge at best for newly elected officials to make substantial change to economic and political inequalities from within the existing system.

The second difference between the focus of a TRC and the narrative restorative community conferencing process is that of the *immediate past*. Restorative justice processes often begin by asking, *What harm was done? What will it take to put it right? Who has the obligations to put it right?* If the instances of wrongdoing and harm occurred in the immediate past (Liberia, South Africa, Chile, Rwanda), then some, if not most, of the victims of specific harms were alive, and many of those who had been responsible as well as those who had responsibility and the capacity to be held accountable were still available to participate in a process. Specific individual harms could be repaired by specific individuals and institutional leaders took responsibility for doing so.

In Canada and Australia, whose residential school systems harmed the First Nation's populations for a period stretching more than eighty years, and Greensboro, where the division and harm have been politically, sometimes violently, and always systematically reinforced over multiple generations, it is often difficult to identify a specific perpetrator of an individual harm. Many of the less obvious but still harmful practices and relational patterns have been normalized such that you can now have *racism without racists* (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). And when the activities are the official policy and practice of an entire governing structure, it becomes more difficult to establish an accountability structure. Greensboro might have been seduced into the possibility of an effective TRC because of a specific incident in the recent past – the 1979 incident and subsequent trials. However, because it was just one of the more visible recent flare-ups in a longstanding and multifaceted set of harms, it would be difficult to restrict the TRC process to just one day's events or even the day plus the

investigation and trials. This may in fact have contributed to what some perceived as the lack of legitimacy of the GTRC process. In order to remain focused, many voices and perspectives would have to have been excluded. The act of exclusion or silencing would cause people, even supporters of the process, to feel unvalued. Ironically, the attempt to focus, which causes the need to restrict who participates, would be used by those who want to completely silence the process as an explanation for the lack of legitimacy. And if the interrelated and unrelated acts of marginalization were allowed to be aired through the TRC, then the process becomes a general gripe session, which also loses its legitimacy.

While the restorative principles of establishing inclusive processes to identify and repair harms might be applicable, the standard methods are likely to be unavailing. Because in Greensboro the harm is so longstanding, it is embedded not only in the systems, structures, and relational patterns, but also in the dominant narratives and the identities of most of the people. When a society is multiply wounded (Cabrera, 2007) over several generations, the performative response that might have originally been made in response to repression can become a central, and even cherished, part of the repressed group's identity (Butler, 1997; Nelson, 2001; Eyerman, 2001). Whereas Greensboro may have the benefit of changing the occupants of the seats of power, authority, and governance, such change is not likely to undo the instruments of power (like the police and the owners of major economic forces) or change the models and systems of government.

Meaning is not made for us (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). "Certainly, the ways we speak and the things we speak about are part of our cultural heritage; they are handed down to us and they are our tools for making sense" (p. 34). The ways of making meaning are susceptible to change, and if the ways of making sense are susceptible to change, then the systems, institutions, and relational patterns that were involved in the sense making can also be shifted to conform to new meanings. It is the discourse that has to shift in order for systems and relational patterns to begin to realign over time in accordance with the new discourse. Discourse cannot be shifted in one conversation, but people can begin in a conversation to shift and renegotiate their own position in relationship to that discourse. Re-authoring a conflict-saturated story to build a new story as the way forward offers a promising approach in interpersonal relational contexts to begin shifting positionality and build

supporting structures in favor of the shifted positions. Narrative mediation shows great promise at the context of the interpersonal conflict.

6.15 A Measure of Validity for the Development of the Methods

The two processes – narratively modified focused conversations and narrative restorative community conferencing – were designed to incorporate constructionist principles and introduce the hallmarks of narrative mediation into the process of developing strategies for community transformation. As described in Chapter III the processes were developed following Turnbull's (2002) eight stage process for constructionist theory building. To restate, those stages are

1. Start with a question and select a social setting in which to conduct the study.
2. Decide what will be studied, under what circumstances, and over what period of time.
3. Gain access and entry to the site.
4. Select appropriate research strategy.
5. Using inductive analysis, adopt a system of coding of field notes and documents.
6. Look for the meaning and perspectives of the participants in the study.
7. Develop working models to explain the phenomena in the study.
8. Present findings in narrative form supported by evidence from the statements and behaviors recorded in interviews and notes; provide an interpretive commentary framing the key findings in the study. (Turnbull, 2002 p. 324)

Although I did not have Turnbull's framing before I began this work, the process I pursued directly tracks this progression of stages. I worked through the general articulation of my research question with my advisor (stage 1). The opportunity to test the approach in Greensboro emerged at the same time that the questions were being refined (stage 1). Through the interviews and community listening that I had participated in for the assessment of the Greensboro TRC, I had gained access to the community (stage 3). Based on the transition for the TRC study to a larger community action agenda, the time frame for study was established (stage 2).

The opportunity to dialogue around the play arose as a result of continuing interviews, and it was at that point that I decided to use the play and subsequent dialogue as the basis for my research (stage 4). It was also only after the decision was

made to use the play and dialogue that the methods of dialogue were developed (stage 4). It was not until I got this far into the process that I realized that I would actually need to develop and not simply apply dialogue models (stage 4).

Once the conversations were conducted and transcribed, I began trying to identify a conceptual framing to understand what the data was saying. Nelson's (2001) conceptualization of *narratively damaged identities* and Cobb's (2013) *narrative compression* offered further elements of a framework for understanding the results of marginalizing and oppressive discourse; and Foucault's (1980; 1982; 1994) *power/knowledge* framing in combination with his *archeological and genealogical* approaches to unveiling previously subjugated knowledge (1970; 1972; 1984) and Butler's (1997; 2009; 2011) *performativity* and *precarity* offered an analytical approach to begin to undo and transform the effects of the damage at the individual and community level. These conceptualizations provided analytical categories used to code the transcripts (stage 5). Studying the transcripts once coded unveiled for me the strength of the Foucauldian framing for community change, and it also began to crystallize the granular communication model (stage 6 and 7). And this report is the conclusion of the process (stage 8).

There is still a question as to whether the approach is *valid*. In qualitative research, particularly when adopting a constructionist stance, questions of validity are of mixed value. In narrative research, the question of good research "relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability. It is important to not squeeze the language of narrative into language created for other forms of research" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006, p. 184). Rather, "the validity of a project should be assessed from within the situated perspective and traditions that frame it" (Riessman, 2008, p. 185). Riessman (2008) further suggests that among the qualitative values to assess whether narrative research is *good* would be the *coherence*, *persuasion*, and *presentation* of the material.

While the methods presented rely heavily on narrative approaches, there are also other methodological paradigms that inform the work. Principally, the models are designed to support the community's move towards radical transforming action. As such, I have chosen to consider the five principles for validation of action research narrative proposed by Heikkinen and colleagues (2007).

Heikkinen et al.'s, validation principles for action research are presented below with a brief assessment as to whether or how the methods designed for this engagement meet each of the criteria**.**

1. Principle of historical continuity - This principle raises questions that analyze the *history of action*: how has the action evolved historically? *Emplotment*: how logically and coherently does the narrative proceed? While this question is, as are all the principles of validation, ultimately an assessment to be made by the reader, there are some preliminary observations that can be made. First, the nature of the research flowed seamlessly from the questions and conversation occurring in the community. The research presents a measure of historical continuity that could also be described as organic in that the research grew fully out of the context in which it was conducted and the results folded directly back into the life of the community.

2. Principle of reflexivity - *This principle raises questions of subjective adequacy:* what is the nature of the researcher's relationship with his/her object of research? What are the researcher's presumptions of knowledge and reality? *Transparency:* how does the researcher describe his/her material and methods? My initial assessment is that these qualities are fully addressed by the process and the reporting process. I have sought to make my assumptions clear and methods and materials accessible to investigation and reconsideration.

3. Principle of dialectics - This principle raises questions in three areas: 1) Dialogue: how has the researcher's insight developed in dialogue with others?; 2) Polyphony: how does the report present different voices and interpretations?; and 3) *Authenticity:* how authentic and genuine are the protagonists of the narrative? The models and methodological underpinnings were developed primarily in isolation. Although I tried to give priority consideration to the context as I interpreted it, ultimately, the reflection was my own thinking in conversations with my interpretations of various theorists and practitioners, through their writings. With regard to polyphony, my sense is that this is an area that could be stronger in the reporting and interpreting. I chose the method, the means of analysis and the material to be included and excluded from that presentation. I incorporate other voices in the presentation of the narrative by use of participants' own words. Yet, as

the report's author, I have the position for framing and excluding or including materials and thus it may fall short on polyphony. Even with those shortcomings, my sense is that the people and the community are presented authentically.

4. Principle of workability and ethics - This principle raises questions in four domains: 1) *Pragmatic quality*: how well does the research succeed in creating workable practices? 2) *Criticalness*: what kind of discussion does the research provoke? 3) *Ethics*: how are ethical problems dealt with? and 4) *Empowerment*: does the research make people believe in their own capabilities and possibilities to act and thereby encourage new practices and actions? This is the strongest feature of the research. The methods were organic and responsive when developed in the context of Greensboro. Yet, the methods are also easily accessible and adaptable to other contexts and constructions. Identifying (or developing) icebreaker questions and a theatre production to serve as the Freirian code or Palmer's *third thing* that are particular for the new context should be relatively easy to accomplish. The facilitation methods, having been presented clearly and in great detail should also be easily reproduced in other settings. The most powerful aspect of the research was the response from the community. Participants have used the results of these dialogues as the basis for community action that was continuing for more than twelve months at the time of the writing and the action seems to be gaining momentum.

5. Principle of evocativeness - *Evocativeness:* how well does the research narrative evoke mental images, memories or emotions related to the theme? Because the author is too close to the material it is impossible to make an assessment of the extent to which this principle was achieved. Meaning making is co-action. This is where the reader is very much needed to continue the assessment of this work. The evocativeness Heikkinen, et al. describe is one in which the reader or consumer of research makes a determination as to whether the presentation of the research is sufficiently descriptive to establish relatable mental images in the readers' experience. This is not an assessment that the researcher can make absent responses from the readers. The evocativeness principle, if tested, could provide an excellent assessment of the principles of granular communication: A research question to test this principle might be are the images – and therefore stories, values, emotions and actions – produced in the readers the same as intended by the researcher?

6.16 Summary and Observations

In this chapter, I presented a model of narrative restorative community conferencing. I advance this model as an alternative to truth and reconciliation commissions and other restorative approaches to be used in a context where there is a compressed, conflict-saturated, dominant master narrative. The original question posed was whether narrative mediation principles could be used as the basis for radical community transformation efforts. The methods I proposed were designed to introduce the *principles* of narrative mediation because the basic *practice* pattern for narrative mediation (Monk & Winslade, 2013; Winslade & Monk, 2001, 2008) is not conceived for multiple voices and diffuse harms as presented in the community context. This model also retains the basic guiding direction of restorative justice. This question is based on the assumption that the interpersonal and institutional relationship patterns in communities are the performative manifestation of the prevailing discourses and dominant narratives. In the same way that narrative mediation externalizes a conflict, builds and gives texture to the conflict-saturated narrative, works towards decompression of compressed narratives, identifies unique outcomes, and identifies openings for action towards a preferred reality in interpersonal, the narrative restorative community conferencing process seeks to do so in a community context. The use of deconstructive discursive practices – such as double listening to identify the absent but implicit and identifying the personal narrative streams that inform meaning-making – is an essential aspect of the work for communities.

In communities, particularly those with dominant narratives that have become compressed with large measures of institutional resource used for silencing and marginalizing, it is important to do this work in group settings like focus groups. Allowing a collective to build a shared narrative expands the audience for each individual speaker, allows the differences of perspective to nuance and give rich texture to the story, and at the same time exposes the edges and fragility of various discourses (Denborough, 2010). Collectively narrating unique outcomes and preferred narratives also serves a dual function. First, the collective witnessing of struggles and resistance strategies affirms the teller/actor and informs the listener/co-creator of communities. Secondly, the telling of these strategies unveils previously subjugated indigenous knowledge. Exposure of the edges of discourse

with the nuancing and texturing that occurs from multiple perspectives and the affirmation and revelations from the sharing of previously subjugated resistance strategies all create space within the fissures of an otherwise compressed narrative. The conversation is framed against the background of the role of script and back story and the concept of community members as actors. This opens a new opportunity to perform community differently.

6.16 Preview of Chapter VII

While Chapters V and VI primarily considered the process and process rationale, the content of the conversations had to be considered in order to appreciate the work done by the processes. Chapter VII will focus on the content of the conversations. It was intended to use Foucauldian power/knowledge analysis to unveil the instrumental modes of power within this context.

Chapter VII -**Content Analysis**

7.1 Distinctions Between Method Analysis and Content Analysis

In the previous two chapters, the analytical focus was that of the facilitator's work in directing both the narratively modified focused conversation (Chapter V) and the narrative restorative community conferencing processes (Chapter VI). In those chapters, primary consideration was for the facilitator's actions and words. There was also consideration of the rationale for the actions and words in creating desired conditions for effective conversation in the context of community with historically divergent experiences defined by some socially constructed category. I also demonstrated that the processes were developed in line with Turnbull's (2002) eight-stage process for constructionist theory building and measured favorably in consideration of Heikkinen et al.'s five principles of validation for narrative action research. In this chapter, the focus is now placed on the texts produced by the conversation. In this chapter, I present a thematic content analysis with a primary focus on its value for developing community strategies for radical community transformation.

The primary focus of narrative analysis is on the text of the transcription itself and on what was told rather than on the dynamics of the performance associated with the telling (dialogic or performative analysis), or the organization of the speech or the use of particular forms of and approaches to speech (structural analysis), or on how the context and audience might have shaped the telling and meaning making (discourse analysis) (Riessman, 1993). I do have an interest in applying these approaches to narrative and conversation analysis in future studies. On a couple of especially pointed occasions, I draw from these other analytical modes to demonstrate the potential information that could be gained from them. However, full application of those additional approaches is beyond the scope of this study.

New methods of facilitation are the central consideration of this study. And yet, what is produced in the conversations that utilize those methods, and the use to which that content can be put, are among the ultimate measures of value for these or any other model of dialogue used as part of a community engagement effort. What I seek to do in this thematic content analysis is to demonstrate how the content produced in these conversations establishes a positive foundation for future

collective community action. If, following Foucault, I assert that relations of power shape the lived experience of community, then an effective foundation for collective action must include a strong analysis of the relationships and mechanisms of power. Such a strong foundation would also frame a community understanding of the problematics in ways that identify new openings for both individual and collective action. Finally, this foundation would assist participants in a community change process to determine where and how to leverage their desired change in relationship to the current operations of power.

This content analysis is preliminary to offer additional support for the claim of the useful application of the methods. In Chapters V and VI, I demonstrated that the process of method development followed Turnbull's eight-stage model of theory-building and comported with Heikkinen's principles of validation for narrative action research. The methods also have an internal coherence and are organic, democratic, and authentic. One measure of the value of the work is the usefulness to which the results were put, which might be indicated in the fact that the group that participated in these two conversations has continued for more than twelve months after the conclusion of these two conversations – with this analysis as the foundation for their community action. Many of the follow-ons (as opposed to outcomes) of this community conversation process may not be assessable for several months, possibly years, hence. One approach to gauging the effectiveness of these methods might be to use them at the beginning of a participatory action process and follow the process over an extended period to note the continuing indicators of transformation.

The transcripts from the two dialogue sessions were coded in multiple ways. First, using the Foucauldian categories for relations and operation of power, I identified exchanges and statements from the participants that directly referred to one or more of those framings. Secondly, I highlighted exchanges that reflected or affirmed the conceptualization of granular communications, particularly looking for narrative stream analysis. Thirdly, I looked for comments and exchanges that drew on the performance metaphor or in some way referenced Butler's conceptualization of performativity. Finally, I also looked for exchanges that reinforced the presence of the nine hallmarks of narrative mediation. There are two aspects of content from these two conversations. I will highlight as significant in preparation for future community-engaged action. First, the group's analysis of the mechanisms and

relations of power operating to shape their community; the framing of power that I am using is derived from Michel Foucault (1980; 1982; 1994). Secondly, I look for the participants' capacity to begin shifting – or to see openings for shifting – their own positions in relationship to those power mechanisms, particularly if those shifts coincide with a perceived or actual increase range of performative possibilities (resistance). Some of these positioning shifts will also be identified, following Deleuze, as *lines of flight* that move individuals away from the already and always present trajectories shaped by the intersecting discourses and narratives that frame their lives (Winslade, 2009).

The first section of this chapter summarizes the case for a Foucauldian power analysis as both relevant to and advantageous in the conduct of large-scale community change efforts. The second section highlights comments and exchanges from the two conversations that demonstrate how the community's understanding of its own context is well-explained within Foucault's framing of power. This demonstrates how the inquiry method presented elicits from and then unveils this knowledge for the community. The third section is notably brief. It highlights a few examples from the conversations in terms that reflect the potential beginnings of positional shifts or lines of flight for some of the participants. While I note throughout possible areas for future research, Chapter VIII also includes implications for future research and practice suggested by the methods themselves and by the content of these conversations.

At the time of the conversations, neither the facilitator nor the participants had been exposed to Foucault's analytics of power, which means it was not the facilitator's intention to shape the conversations along the Foucauldian power/knowledge trajectory. Highlighted sections of the text demonstrate the effectiveness of the processes developed to generate an effective contextual analysis and action platform without priming any of the participants or the facilitator with specific theory. In the future, a facilitator fully versed in a Foucauldian framing of power/knowledge, Butler's performativity, and the granular communications model could inquire even more effectively into the power/knowledge dynamics of the community.

7.1.1 Why Foucault's power analysis is well suited to enhance community change efforts.

As described in Chapter II, there are a variety of approaches to community change. This is especially true as it relates to issues of socially constructed inequalities based on race (the color line), ethnicity, religion, or gender. Some of these approaches incorporate conceptualizations of *power* in their context analysis. Many approaches that consider *power* take a structuralist or role theory approach, which I have argued in Chapter II has either an embedded sense of futility or a platform of redemptive violence as the basis for community action. These approaches to power also treat power as an entity that can be completely held by some and unavailable to others. Further, structuralist approaches to power only reference power as a force of repression. A poststructuralist or social constructionist framing of power – at least as presented by Michel Foucault and expanded by Judith Butler – avoids these significant shortcomings. Foucault describes power as existing and manifesting in relationship as having both repressive and also productive capacities and being embedded in the discourse and narratives that people live in and out of. For those primary reasons, I adopted a Foucauldian approach to power. Having relied primarily on structuralist and realist approaches to power in the first two and a half decades of my work as a mediator and community organizer, I found Foucault's relationally-defined framing of power effective in creating openings for action. After a brief restatement of Foucault's framing of power and the subjectification/objectivizing of people, I highlight several comments and exchanges that provide context analysis, fit the Foucauldian power/knowledge subjectivation framing, and that could be drawn on for action planning and community transformation.

7.2 A Foucauldian Framing of Power

Foucault (1980) conceptualizes power as action acting indirectly on the action of another. As further described in Chapter II, Foucault contends that power is a matter of directly or indirectly shaping the range of actual or perceived possible actions of another. When so constrained, guided, or compelled, a person becomes subjected by that relation of power. It is in becoming subject that the extent of a person's or group's agency is established. Agency describes the perceived performative range of action a person or group possesses or believes itself to possess

in any particular context. This objectivizing, which Foucault argues results from the operations of relations of power, largely shapes the distribution of goods, services, and opportunities, and establishes the values hierarchy of a particular community. Objectivizing can occur in many ways through institutional arrangements, community values, and traditions that shape expectations of relations. By gaining a more complete understanding of relations of power, those community members who are not satisfied with how current relational patterns define their lived experience can begin to resist and reshape them.

To understand those relationships and the ways that relations of power are embedded in discourse and reproduced or sustained, Foucault argues that persons must determine the dividing practices, the mechanisms served, informed or established in particular power relations, and the modes of struggle against the operation of power. The modes of struggle point to how people resist being oppressed, marginalized, or made non-existent or invisible. It is the lack of sufficient perceived agency to define the individual relationships, institutional arrangements, and discursive forces that people experience as *oppressive*, *marginalizing*, *discriminatory*, and so on; and so the struggle against these forms is the struggle for agency. But it is also important to understand that power is productive. Following Butler, the analysis of power must recognize that personal and group performativity contributes to the creation and stabilization of certain conditions in community, and yet it is the subjection to power, Butler argues, that initially forms the identity and in turn the performativity of identity that maintains, stabilizes and reproduces the relations of power. Butler (1997a) argues that a person's formation as subject depends on the power that calls them into being. When that power is dominating and repressive, this mode of identity formation is what Nelson (2001) characterizes as an *infiltrated consciousness* (pp. 28-28).

Many experiences of community life result from socially constructed, repetitive, interpersonal relational patterns, institutions, policies and practices. These repetitive patterns, practices, policies, and institutions are guided but not determined by dominant narratives in which are embedded relations of power. The relational patterns and practices often only make sense inside the continued dominance of those narratives. People who live in contexts in which these narratives predominate often contribute unknowingly to the production, reproduction, and

even stability of these narratives. Developing a shared understanding of the operations and relations of power within such a community setting creates more clearly-purposed openings for action. Following Foucault, Butler, and Nelson, I would argue that it is the work of subjectivation – the operation of power in the formation of identity — particularly in circumstances of dominant and compressed narratives, that must be unveiled to give communities an opportunity to reshape relations and patterns of power in favor of fully perceived and actual agency or, following Taliaferro et al. (2013), *operational citizenship*.

Did the conversation lead to an effective framing of the operation of power?

In the two conversations that are the focus of this study, participants concretely described operations of power and modes of struggle and resistance without being introduced to or adopting the Foucauldian framing. They were not knowingly or purposefully speaking to or from the frame of that theory; at least, I had not presented the frame to them at any point and had no reason to believe that it was a commonly –held or widely-known framing. Rather, the theory, in a post-hoc consideration, describes well the ways they spoke of their lives. What the following analysis develops are the findings upon which I base my assertion that the *modified focused conversation process* and the *narrative restorative community conferencing models as applied to a complex community experience* were effective in allowing participants to name the mechanisms of power relations shaping their lived experience of community. The naming of a problematic and the analyzing of a context creates a foundation for a participatory action agenda that consciously and directly resists the mechanisms of power without either the facilitator having an explicit exposure to Foucauldian power analysis or participants having knowledge of narrative theory, social constructionist principles, or Foucault's framing of power. Another value of this naming is that the problematic is objectified and not the people. Externalizing the problematic relocates the place of agency wherein the problem becomes subject to the people and not vice versa (Monk, 1997, p. 26).

7.3 Power Analysis

The content highlighted below indicates that the processes themselves elicited an effective Foucauldian-framed power analysis without any instruction in theory. Also the narrative restorative community conferencing created a foundation for future community transformation initiatives framed in narrative and constructionist

terms. This is essential to the larger project of community-wide transformation of an unresolved historical harm and suggests that using narrative mediation as the framing for such a change is a valuable approach.

In the following section, I highlight some exchanges from the two conversations, which reflect aspects of a Foucauldian analysis of power. Specifically, I identify exchanges that characterize a) dividing practices and modes of inquiry, b) five mechanisms to establish or maintain relations of power, and c) modes of struggle.

7.3.1 Dividing practices and modes of inquiry.

Dividing practice is a categorization scheme that creates distinctions among people and groups (Foucault, 1994, pp. 326-327). These categories are often visible categories such as racial, ethnic, age, or gender performance. They could also be areas where distinctions must be discovered or admitted to such as ethnic heritage, age, religious beliefs, gender-relationship orientation, place of residence, or national origin. Various discourses come to define the category itself in ways that establish its boundaries and determine whether and, if so, how porous those boundaries are. Various discourses also establish the values hierarchy for in and out groups, and the appropriate performative ranges prescribed (albeit not definitively) for those who accept being positioned in or out by discourse. A dividing practice becomes a *mode of inquiry* when there are *scientific* and political uses made of the distinctions to support a particular social or political structure or to create a *truth* or reality about people who are placed in or outside of certain groups so as to justify political and social order or the exercise of government control (Foucault, 1994, p. 328).

Intersectionality among many discourses continues to refine the effective values hierarchy and performative ranges. There are multiple discourses on each of the divided categories. As the discourses are combined in multiple combinations, intersectionality establishes additional discursive categories (viz.: male; White male; 50 year old White male; 50 year old White male with less than a high school diploma).[31] In every context multiple discourses intersect to inform the meaning of being in or out of specific categories. Those discourses position in-groups and out-

[31] This series of identifiers is not presented to suggest that 'White' or 'male' or '50 years old' is in and of itself a discourse. Rather, there are multiple discourses associated with any of these modes of inquiry. The various identifiers can be framed and understood by multiple discursive combinations that either increase or constrict the perceived and actual performative range that the person experiences as well as the range of action that others perceive for them in any given circumstance.

groups in certain ways. It is in the 'honoring' of these categorical distinctions – or understanding and explaining the context through the various modes of inquiry – which the relations of power prescribed in discourse, have their greatest effect. It is by claiming and operating in these categories and by distinguishing self from others on an in-group and out-group basis that people subject themselves to the associated discursive forces. Their own actions are potentially constrained, guided, or compelled by their interpretation of their position relative to others within these discourses.

As described in Chapter III in the discussion of the granular communications model, explaining context through the modes of inquiry has the effect of increasing distance and decreasing dimensionality in the exchange; the "further and flatter" the exchange, the more defined and limited the range of performative options. One aspect of the operation of power is that placing the 'Other' in a category or mode of inquiry also places the speaker themselves in a category as well; which in turn guides, directs, limits or compels a certain range of actions. The productive aspects of power thus produce a range of action that simultaneously constrains the possibilities for action.

Two dividing practices and modes of inquiry and participants' responses to them are presented below. One mode - economics and in this instance, specifically employment - for the most part must be discovered and is fluid and variable over the life of an individual. The other category – race - is often assumed to be both visible and morphological and this suggests immutable and even essential[32]. Like economics, the performative aspects of race must also be acknowledged. Both economics and race and the multiple possible intersections are modes that make significant contributions to the shaping of patterns, practices, and institutional arrangements that are hallmarks of the community's experience.

7.3.1.1 Employment/economics.

There are many discourses that shape how people relate to employment and the attending economic status. By distinguishing one from another in this way, people adopt a filter for listening and have (possibly unconscious) limitations and

[32] This is the case within a particular context. From one context to the next the categorizations and meaning of race are quite variable. For instance, An African American might be considered, mixed race or colored in another context, mestiza in yet another. In apartheid era South Africa, upon entering the country, an African American with US citizenship would have had presented to them the option of being *honorary* White while in that country.

expectations for the way that the other will perform in community. The following are two exchanges that exemplify this dividing practice/mode of inquiry:

> ***Facilitator****: … I recognized that it will be helpful for us to do just one time go around, I cannot assume that everybody knows the names of everybody who's in here. And so we don't need to do any kind of affiliation or association. Just names for now would be wonderful. And so I'm* [Facilitator].
>
> [Group laughter]
>
> ***Facilitator****: So as we introduce ourselves we are also sort of doing a sound check. As we're doing names, we're doing the sound check to see the level of projection that is required for everyone to be able to hear everybody else. So if you're not hearing someone, you just give some indication. That would help.*
>
> ***Female Speaker #2****: Can I ask a quick question? Is there a reason why you don't want affiliations? Because I'm so curious about where people are…*
>
> ***Facilitator****: Well I don't want affiliations I don't necessarily want them because usually affiliations open the long trail of descriptions about work and titles and all that kind of stuff. I really want to be sure to avoid all of that. So if we could do name and only affiliation in a breath. That would be really helpful.*

Analysis: Many of the mechanisms used to enforce the operations of power and maintain the hierarchies established by relations of power are directly or indirectly associated with economics and also with the privileges assigned to and value associated with titles and positions (Tan & Moghaddam, 1995). Even though these values and privileges are impermanent, fluid, and context-specific, they are still value-laden. The fluidity owes to the fact that the defining or dominant discourses shift in relation to both context and in relation to each person's narrative streams used to interpret that information. Cobb (2013), citing Rancière, argues that "speaking is the process of being constructed by the 'Other' as a human being, and this has to do not only with hearing, but with legitimizing the voice of the speaker" (pp. 92-93). She later states that 'oppression … occurs when people either cannot speak or cannot be heard" (p. 241). In certain contexts economic and employment-based hierarchies often determine speaker legitimacy.

It does not appear from this exchange that the speaker asking the question about employment and affiliations was consciously trying to establish the hierarchical values and positional listening associated with employment. It also does not appear that the person is offering this as a way of contributing to the power analysis that was being conducted. And yet, following Butler (1997a), as the power that is resisted in communities is often the same power on which each person depends for its very formation, requests for affiliation as a mode of identification draw on the subject-forming powers of economic positioning.

For the future: It was not part of this study but what this exchange would allow is a starting point for a later inquiry about the various discourses concerning employment, community contribution, and the prevailing or competing values that are positioning people and creating the separate and distinct operational spheres that so many of the participants referenced when describing the problematic. That subsequent conversation will be significant for building an alliance for social change through unveiling unconscious power dynamics that are reflected in relationships within the group. The fact that the subject was raised by the participants allows the facilitator to highlight and investigate the issue later without necessarily introducing the facilitator's own agenda to the community conversation.

7.3.1.2 Race/ethnicity.

In addition to modes of inquiry like employment in which people have to discover information to determine how or whether to (de)legitimize the voice of a particular speaker, there are other modes – like race and gender performance – where people tend to make determinations based on observable physical characteristics. Admittedly, there may be a limited facticity associated with the observer's determination, but the determination initially positions the speaker within a discourse of the observer's choosing. One of the most significant and impactful ways that people subject themselves in the United States and other racialized societies is through racial identification and valuation. Race may have lingering powerful social distinctions because it is among the handful of socially constructed distinctions that have a long history in the United States of relational patterns forcibly shaped by policy, practice, and institutions organized explicitly around the privileging and exclusion of people based on this set of fictions. The following comments reflect the ease with which people subject themselves in this way. The

comments also demonstrate how the intersectionality of discourses affects the in-group/out-group formation within this particular mode of inquiry:

Race as dividing practice and mode of inquiry - EXAMPLE #1

> ***Facilitator****: Alright. So I want to invite you all to do something: Tell me, which among the characters in the play do you most closely align with? If you were trying to understand your own life story or you are making a connection of challenges, of the way that your life is structured or whatever, who among the characters in the play, if any, did you align with?*
> ***Male Speaker 3****: What do you mean by align?*
> ***Facilitator****: Or connect to or relate to, have kind of, some level or kind of connection to their story. Is that clearer?*
> ***Male Speaker 3****: That really doesn't answer my question but I'm a White guy so I got to – naturally, I'm very comfortably aligned with the White director whatever his name is. And I saw myself when he went to the back room - when I was challenged like he was, splitting in the scene, going directing things happening from behind the closed door. I mean that's an alignment, I guess.*

This is an example of how people subject themselves through the dividing practices or modes of inquiry. The expression used was that *naturally* because I am White, I align with the White character. This suggests that there were (personally assigned) limits to the possibilities of how the speaker was able to position himself in relationship to others who are seen as part of an out-group or *Other*. Interestingly, in this instance, it was not necessarily an obvious alignment. The director character was young (late 20s to early 30s), played with stereotypical New York (or possibly Jewish) speech inflection, and characteristically described as *effeminate*, indicating or alluding to the possibility not explicitly stated that he was homosexual. The speaker, on the other hand, held none of those characteristics, and yet he still aligned with *the White guy*. It was also telling that in the play there were a total of four actors including the director who were morphologically what would often be considered Caucasian and who performed explicitly White male characters that were available for natural alignment. The assistant to the director was described by the participants in our conversations as young, eager, obsequious, and ingratiating. There was a

character cast as an older commercially-successful actor, described by our participants as aloof, unconcerned, uninformed of the racial and class dynamics operating in the play, and even a bit scared of the Black actors. Among the White male characters in the play – if we accept that as a limitation for alignment – he was the eldest character. There was also an older, working class doorman. His character was described by our participants as unimpressed by the trappings of the theatre, somewhat subversive, empathetic to the cause of the African American actors, and even a bit mischievous. There were multiple choices of alignment, even after choosing to categorize himself as *the White guy*. And yet, the actor that the speaker naturally aligned with was the actor who played the role of the director – the one with the most power, control, and possibly the most investment in maintaining the status quo. It is not clear whether the intersectionality of Whiteness and authority and (at least nominal) control was the basis of the alignment more than the simple feature of Whiteness or maleness.

Consideration for future action: In subsequent conversations, while deepening relationships and furthering planning for community action, this exchange would be a good candidate for conducting a narrative stream analysis at the granular level to investigate the relations of power implicated by this observation. That was not the model of engagement for this particular study, but it highlights another value of using the play or another *third thing* as problem-posing material. In a narratively-modified focused conversation, there would be an opportunity to get to the granular level to determine which stories the person used to make meaning of the various characters and how those various narrative streams impacted the person's listening, speaking, and meaning-making not only in relationship to the characters in the play but, more importantly, also to the other dialogue participants and members of the community.

Race as dividing practice and mode of inquiry - Example #2

Another example of the force of race as a dividing practice and mode of inquiry could be seen in a speaker's discussion of the absence of shared race among movie characters as a barrier to relating.

> ***Male Speaker 9****: I had difficulty in understanding the protagonist to be the protagonist because the other storylines were as strong as hers, and so it was unique. I mean if I was to sit back and look at something*

from a vantage point that I usually don't get to look at. And so I realized, this is my moment. What was interesting to me about what you're saying though is that most of us grew up. If you went to the theater as a kid, let's say it was a western - like a John Wayne movie - I wanted to be the hero, right? Well actually no. I'm not the cowboy hero. Was he going to look like me? And if I'm looking at the theater back in the 50s and 60s, I'm looking at everyone, and you don't see anybody that looks like me you know. So when we started to talk about well, how do you connect or align with characters - so we are always trying to do that - you know they say when you look at a group photograph, the first one you look for is yourself? How do I look? Well if you're in a photograph but you don't see yourself, you develop other lines of analysis, and you're always checking out other things to see how those things are relative to you because that gives you a sense of position. I can triangulate if I know who he is and she is, and what not, and I create this meeting you know, so that I can function. And that's what it is. I came into this community as an outsider, and I'm looking around because I want to see who am I in this picture? Because I'm in other places when people said you don't belong in this picture. But you could be acting up, starting things up. This is not your movie or your play. And that's what I was thinking about when you asked that earlier question about that moment and what character do you align with, I was like, "Oh, that's an interesting question." And for me at times, I could identify with the director. Yeah, I've been stepped on and beat up and you know, and taken advantage of and you know, and then he says, "Well I mean that's the way of the world." I said, "Well yeah, it is. I can relate to that. I know what that's about." You know? White or not, gay or not gay, I know what that's about. And I think other Black folks do too.

This insightful set of observations highlights the power of race as a dividing practice. The speaker identified race as a dividing practice or mode of inquiry by speaking of his frustrated effort to identify with the hero in the movie or play who "didn't look like him." When speaking of this issue and his early narrative of a Western movie, it could be that the speaker meant he was not 6'5" like John Wayne, but more likely, in his reference to the "50s and 60s" as an era of filmmaking, he was speaking of the absence of African American actors and actresses, especially in hero/heroine roles.

The impulse to distinguish and identify oneself along societally prescribed categorical lines such as *race* and then to accept the positions offered by those discourses seems very compelling. When the possibility is not readily apparent or satisfactory, the speaker might look for a work-around. In this instance, the speaker articulated his effective and telling work-around strategy. He identified with the character that had experiences that fit well within the dominant narrative the speaker held of the group he sought to identify with and then highlighted that aspect of the character's narrative that aligned with that dominant narrative. In describing how he chose to align with a particular character that does not fit within the racial/ethnic divide, the speaker offers the assessment, *"Yeah I've been stepped on and beat up and taken advantage of … I can relate to that."* The speaker then makes it clear that he realizes he doesn't fit squarely into the category that strong dividing practices would offer him and that the character would most likely be assigned to – *"White or not, Gay or not gay" – "I know what that's about."* To reinforce the category he thinks this narrative relates, to he closes by saying, "*I know what that's about. And I think other Black folks do too."*

With regard to discursive positioning, the racialized identification was accompanied with an acceptance of victimization and disadvantage. Finding creative options for assuming the position offered by this particular discourse of race along with its embedded inequities is the precise description of the work of a dividing practice as a mode of inquiry. Over time the operation of power is reproduced by assent and acclamation, even of those that do not benefit from accepting that particular construction. Speaker #9 is the highest-ranking faculty in his college academic department. It would have been possible, even conceivable, to align with the same character in his role of power. He could also have aligned with the director character around the position of the director having the perceived power and still having to answer to the economic forces as expressed by the owner and producer of the play. However, the interpretation of the characters' actions and motivations as reflective of marginalization suggests that the performativity of race produced the alignment. Marginalization is a component of the performativity of Blackness … ?

<u>Future considerations –</u> An additional point of interest sparked by this exchange could be explored in a later conversation using a granular communication modeled inquiry. In a similar engagement, the group could explore the stories that

each of primary speakers in the two examples cited used to interpret the character they aligned with. Both aligned with the same character – the young White male actor who played the director. Each speaker had demographic characteristics clearly distinguishable from the character. It would be interesting and informative to notice how very different stories and life experiences would cause two people to view a *third thing* (an actor in a play) from quite different lenses and still arrive at the same point of aligning with the character.

There were many other instances during the two conversations where the modes of inquiry impacted or influenced how participants allowed themselves to relate to the characters in the play as well as to one another. The dividing practice or mode of inquiry does not determine the range of actions at a given time. However, the two examples above suggest that if people are trying to understand their available performative range in certain circumstances, the dividing practices or mode of inquiry might limit the places they might look for actions to emulate. The boundaries and distinctions established by the dividing practices are reinforced and reproduced by the differentially productive and repressive mechanisms of power also in effect at any given moment in a community. The next section highlights certain exchanges that reference mechanisms that animate the relations of power.

7.3.2 Mechanisms to establish or maintain relations of power.

In addition to dividing practices/modes of inquiry, Foucault sought to unveil relations of power that produce, reproduce, and reinforce societal conditions (Foucault, 1994, pp. 342-348). A relation of power acts on possible or actual future or present action. Even though consent and violence are both instruments and/or results of power, they do not constitute the principle or basic nature of power. Rather the basic nature of power is seen in the day-to-day interactions, systemic, and institutional arrangements, and ways of speaking that result in actions that are constrained, directed, or rewarded towards the maintenance of the order that supports a particular power regime. Specifically, Foucault (1994) asserts that

> [An] *analysis of power relations within a society cannot be reduced to the study of a series of institutions or even the study of all those institutions that would merit the name "political." Power relations are rooted in the whole network of the social.* (p. 345)

In conducting an analysis of power relations of the whole network, a Foucauldian analysis demands that "… a certain number of concrete points be

established" (p. 344). Specifically, he asserts that it is important to notice 1) the systems of differentiation, 2) types of objectives, 3) instrumental modes, 4) forms of institutionalization, and 5) degrees of rationalization that establish and simultaneously result from relations of power (p. 343). There were several exchanges highlighted below in which participants offered clear instances of most of these points. This suggests that the models of facilitation – narratively modified focused conversations and particularly collective narrative restorative conferencing – can be effectively used to facilitate a power analysis as the basis for an action agenda. The necessary points to be established are elicited from the process without either the facilitator or the participants being informed of the analytical framework.

7.3.3 Systems of differentiation.

A primary mechanism for the operation of power is what Foucault describes as *systems of differentiation*. The systems that permit one to act upon the actions of others are juridical and traditional status or privilege, economic differences in the appropriation of wealth and goods, differing positions within the processes of production, linguistic or cultural differences, differences in know-how and competence, and so forth. The systems of differentiation most often act to create, reinforce, even justify or give a foundation for dividing practices and modes of inquiry. These differentiating systems are productive, reproductive, and, in many ways, self-sustaining in the sense that every relation of power puts into operation differences that are, at the same time, its conditions and its results (p. 344).

The question I asked to advance this conversation was

> ***Facilitator****: What I actually wanted to do was try a method for naming the problem but I wanted to practice first using the play. I want to practice naming the problem in the play in a specific way and then after we do that for just a little while, then we can come back and talk specifically about Greensboro 'cause while there may be some metaphors, some things that are pointed to in the play that may point to Greensboro there's probably a very different way of naming what happens in Greensboro and so I want to invite you all to try that. Does that make sense? Great so this is my first assertion, my first assertion is that the people are never the problem.* ***The people aren't the problem, the problem is the problem*** *and so I want to try and name it. From what you remember in the play, what were - what was a*

major problem or problematic or how would you name the major problematic in the play?

I received many responses to the question. I highlight several here that reference systems of differentiation and other mechanisms of power.

7.3.4 Traditional statuses or privilege.

This first exchange is an example of how traditional statuses are experienced and then passed on to reinforce the distribution of privilege. An older actress seeks to narrate her experiences of both success and failure in the theatre in a way that was calculated to have the younger actor conform his behaviors in the context of the theatre and possibly all of life. This is power in the sense that the older actor's words might constrain, or guide, or compel the younger actor to shape his actions in certain ways. His response will be considered later when describing modes of struggle or resistance. The study guide for the play says,

> *Trouble in Mind opens inside the entrance of a Broadway theater in New York City. Will Etta Mayer, a middle-aged, African-American actress, bangs on the door and finally lets herself in. She scolds the elderly doorman, Henry, for not letting her in out of the cold, until she sees the stage. While she is enraptured by the sight of the theater, Henry recognizes her from when he was an electrician on a show twenty years ago. When Henry leaves, John Nevins, a young African -American actor, enters. He tries to hide his nervousness. In talking to him, Will Etta realizes that they come from the same place and that she knows his parents. Will Etta gives him career advice about how Black people are perceived by White directors and others who run the show. She tells him that he should lie and say he was in the last revival of Porgy and Bess, even though it is untrue. John is skeptical of her counsel.* (Witt, 2009, p. 3)

As a response to this exchange between Will Etta and John when trying to identify and name a problematic that the characters were facing in the play, one speaker speaks directly to a mechanism of power operating in this exchange:

> ***Male Speaker #4****: There is a taking and it's not necessarily forced by anybody …* [Will Etta] *was talking about 'White folks' and what they expect. She is generally living it and it's not as if they went to the room physically and said, "You must act this way before us." But she was*

> *modifying this young man's behavior giving him instructions: "This is how you must remove yourself from yourself and become something else in order to make it." You know and nobody told me how to do that. So what would motivate that - what would be the prime mover there?*

The speaker observed that Will Etta's instructions to the young actor, John, are designed to cause his behavior to conform to traditions that reproduce the existing hierarchy of status and privilege. This is an example of what Foucault would describe as a *productive* and *not repressive* use of power. The young actor is given instructions that would encourage him to perform the kinds of actions that would cause him – according to Will Etta – to be *successful* according to a traditional understanding of the role of African American actors. What might pass for consent is actually the operation of power. The power was productive for Will Etta in the sense that it caused her to behave in certain ways, not just while acting, but also in mentoring and seeking to be helpful to other younger actors. As the speaker noted, "No one told them to do that or act that way." That is the quintessential display of power in the Foucauldian sense – action indirectly acting on the actions of others.

While this situation describes what happened in the play, the passion with which this analysis is provided is clearly fueled by personal narrative that animates the speaker's performance as he recounts this example. It also seems that the last reference the speaker was making – *nobody told* ***me*** *how to do that* – seems to be an indeterminate reference in the sense that it could have been either a statement still about what was happening in the play and it could also have been a personal reference to the speaker's own life. The speaker noticed how there was not a direct action that produced or reproduced the behavioral constraint.

7.3.5 Appropriation of wealth and goods.

The following exchanges reflect what Foucault would describe as an *instrumental mode* and also as part of a system of differentiation. The first two exchanges are both examples, the first explicit, the second implicit, of economic forces serving as instrumental modes of establishing and reinforcing power regimes. Both exchanges occurred in continuing response to the process of naming a primary problematic in the play before beginning the naming of a primary problematic for the city of Greensboro.

Example # 1- Explicit description of economics as an instrumental mode

Male Speaker #7*: Money, money.*

Facilitator*: Money?*
Male Speaker *#7: Everyone is operating out of a fear of not being paid, not having a job, wanting to make money, to have a hit to … it - major capitalism, commerce is a major problem.*
Facilitator*: Okay so when you started out you talked about "the fear" but this is different this isn't actually just fear, is there more specific fear or…?*
Male Speaker *#7: Or yes it's a - they work within a system. They work within a system where they have to behave a certain way to guarantee financial success.*
Facilitator*: Okay.*
Male Speaker *#7: Or financial survival; perhaps there are the various levels of success.*
Facilitator*: Would you label that "money" and that would clear it up for you or is there something else?*
Male Speaker *#7: There is capitalist system. I might go with 'capitalism' instead of 'money.'*
Facilitator*: Okay.*
Male Speaker *#7: Don't … look … I don't want to see those referenced as words of mine!!*

[Laughter]

Here, the speaker identifies a larger system – capitalism – and also notices that the effects of the power operating in this system will have differing impacts on all those impacted by it depending on where and how they are positioned in the system. In many communities, economics, specifically the uneven distribution of access to goods and services, and their means of production, is one of the most recognizable results of and mechanisms of power. But capitalism itself is not a system. It is an interconnected set of discourses with a complementary set of values that establishes, justifies, and reinforces certain relational patterns. Those same discourses also offer rationale in support of the many interconnected institutional arrangements and socializing systems needed to reproduce the discursive threads defined within the conceptualization of capitalism.

A telling comment with regard to the operation and force of this mechanism of power is the speaker's last somewhat flippantly offered comment: "*I don't want to see those referenced as words of mine!*" It was received with group laughter. As a statement it speaks to the hegemonic and possibly dominant role of capitalism in the

operation of power in this community. Hegemonic forces resist their own naming, interrupt every effort to struggle against them, and find ways to incorporate any resistance into the dominant narrative. The unveiling of this mode of power creates openings for action in resistance but in this instance resistance was named and subsequently minimized in the *harmless* form of humor.

Example # 2 – Economics as Instrumental Mode

> ***Female Speaker # 6:*** *I don't know if this is right but there is some sense in that Henry is not economically dependent upon that job, so he doesn't have that much to risk.*
> ***Female Speaker #2****: But he is also wise.*
> ***Female Speaker #6:*** *Everybody else does and because of that they are all divided.*
> ***Female Speaker #2****: He is very wise though.*
> ***Female Speaker #6:*** *No, I do not deny that at all, but wisdom works better when you are independently wealthy or not dependent-*
> ***Facilitator****: So he has found a way in to push through*
> [CROSSTALK]
> ***Facilitator****: So he is not constrained by these economic demands.*
> ***Female Speaker #6:*** *Nor is Judy, Judy comes from a background of privilege presumably so she can take that risk and try to bring everybody together.*

The same instrumental modality – economic pressure – was also emphasized by the discussion of its lack of impact on other characters in the play (i.e. absent but implicit effects). In narrative theory, listening in this way is described as listening for the absent but implicit (White, 2007). Listening includes hearing what is actually said and also attending to what is implied and necessarily so and yet unsaid. The implication given by the observation that an actor and actress in this cast do not have to conform to the operation of power is that the economic forces impact each of them quite differently. What is absent and implicit is that economic forces are present for most and that not being impacted or constrained by them is sufficiently uncommon as to be remarkable.

There are many other examples of instrumental modes referenced in these conversations. Because instrumental modes act in concert with other mechanisms of power, these instruments will be identified in combination with these other mechanisms described below. To fully understand the operations of power that

largely influence the shaping of community, Foucault urges understanding of the types of objectives pursued by those who seek to act upon the actions of others. The objectives that Foucault pointed to include the maintenance of privilege, accumulation of profits, the exercise of statutory authority, and exercise of a function or trade (p. 344).

Each exchange previously mentioned regarding *systems of differentiation* and those that follow describing *forms of institutionalization* also reference the objectives pursued either directly or by implication. The exchanges below also indirectly reference *objectives pursued* by the operations of mechanism of power in the Greensboro context.

> ***Facilitator****: If you have the opportunity to name the primary, a primary not the primary problematic; a significant problematic of Greensboro, how would you name it? You've got those cards just a little reflection.*
> *So you see where we are going right, that* [first conversation about the problematic of the play] *was just for practice, the play was just for practice. We are "performing Greensboro", that is what you all do every day - you perform Greensboro. You are part of the troop that performs Greensboro. In the same way that you named the problematics in the play, how do you name it [the problematic that you face every day] for Greensboro?*
> ***Female Speaker #2****: Can this be something that we experienced?*
> ***Facilitator****: How would you name it?*
> ***Female Speaker #2****: "Less than Me."*
> ***Facilitator****: Sorry?*
> ***Female Speaker #2****: "Less than Me".*
> ***Facilitator****: Less than Me?*
> ***Female Speaker #2****: Yeah.*
> ***Facilitator****: I don't actually know what…*
> *[CROSS TALK]*
> ***Facilitator****: Say more about "Less Than Me" and what that means.*
> ***Female Speaker #2****: Okay. Say "me" is White and I'm the less, as Black less than me. You're still confused, right?*
> ***Facilitator****: I don't know if I'm confused. I just, I don't want to make my meaning of it.*
> ***Female Speaker #2****: Yes.*

***Facilitator**: I have my own sense - when I hear those words, I have my own thinking about what to make it mean, I want to make sure that we are fully capturing your meaning. So I'm trying to, trying to create enough space for that. So, so is it? … Just say a little more?*
***Female Speaker #2**: Okay. I became involved with some people which the first…*
***Facilitator**: So actually, I'm trying to avoid the actual story itself.*
***Female Speaker #2**: Yeah.*
***Facilitator**: And is there a way in?*
***Female Speaker #2**: There is not really a way to…*
***Facilitator**: To capture it without?*
***Female Speaker #2**: Yeah.*
***Facilitator**: Okay, okay.*
***Female Speaker #2**: Okay. I became involved with some people and everything went okay until it was, like I said, you know, "You do what I say do or else!" First off, I've always been upfront about telling people I'm not a yes person, never have been. I've got too old to start that now. And I was trying to be proven wrong.*
***Facilitator**: Okay.*
***Female Speaker #2**: And you know that is to make me feel "less than me."*
***Facilitator**: Okay.*
***Male Speaker #2**: Less than me, is less than a full person?*
***Male Speaker #9**: I was kind of following Female Speaker #2's idea about inequality and I kind of came to oppression that all the powers concentrated in one place with the director and that imbalance causes everyone to act and be contorted in unnatural ways so…*
***Facilitator:** So the problem that you are naming is the imbalance of power?*
***Male Speaker #9**: Yeah and I call that oppression and I can't think that there's a better word for it; power being lopsided, power relations and power being consolidated in one place and not equally distributed.*

The implied objective pursued by this oppression and imbalance of power is the maintenance of privilege and community status. This is the same privilege and status that the female speaker references. She identifies one of the products of an interaction steeped in a relation of power: by establishing habitual and cultural interactional patterns that are based on a perceived hierarchy of value assigned to

different racial and ethnic categories, this hierarchy becomes both a condition and expectation of interactions and a resulting meaning made by those participating in the exchange. The mechanism of power has the same pattern of production as all other mechanisms of power in a Foucauldian scheme. They each establish the conditions under which the interaction can and do take place and also becomes the results of the interaction (Foucault, 1994, p. 341).

Consideration for future facilitation – In addition to eliciting the description of a mechanism of power, this exchange is an excellent reminder that our lives exist inside of stories and meaning is made in the narration. In order to share in the meaning making required to establish community, it may prove necessary to make space for more extensive story-telling opportunities.

7.3.6 Instrumental modes.

Foucault (1994) also argues that account must be taken of the instrumental modes — the tools (instruments) employed to reinforce the hierarchies established by mechanisms of power. Many of the standard instruments are threat of arms, effects of speech, economic disparities, and more or less complex means of control by systems of surveillance with or without archives (p. 344). A previous exercise of violence, especially government-sponsored or sanctioned violence, has the residual impact of shaping perceptions of the range of possible actions that group has available to it.

The mechanisms of power Foucault describes have interacting and often indistinguishable forms. Systems of differentiation are utilized in support of specific objectives pursued through implementing various instruments and tools. The following exchange has the notion of past, present, and potential future violence as subtext in the workings of a particular mechanism of power.

> ***Male speaker # 9****: How about compliance that I'm good. How about compliance?*
> ***Facilitator****: Compliance?*
> ***Male speaker # 9****: Yeah.*
> ***Facilitator****: What about?*
> ***Male speaker # 9****: Well to add onto the capitalism-money aspect, each person has to comply with their assigned role.*
> ***Facilitator****: So the demands of that system right?*
> ***Male speaker # 9****: Yeah.*

> ***Female speaker #2****: In other words, "If you don't do what I say do, I'm going to take my job and go somewhere else." Yeah.*

This is also a clear statement of the effects of multiple and complex instrumental modalities that often result in self-subjectification. Violence and surveillance have occurred in this community over several decades resulting in the type of panopticism conceptualized by Foucault, after Jeremy Bentham (Foucault, 1994, p. 58). The idea that in the face of a particular threat of economic sanction or overt violence people would operate in a way that might appear to be compliant or even self-motivated demonstrates the effects of indirect action upon the action of others — power.

Although this study does not include a fully developed discourse analysis, it is important to notice the context in which the exchange about compliance occurred. Most people participating in the conversation were at least partially familiar with the history of Greensboro (NC), which includes violent responses to civil rights demonstrations[33] as well as political actions to marginalize the actors and legally sanction the actions[34]; police supported violence in response to union organizing efforts[35]; lack of police or judicial support in the face of private violence against certain demographic and ideological groups[36]; the decision to shut down a large employment center (textile mill) in response to efforts to organize labor or desegregate a work force[37]; more recent overt violence by police[38]; racial discrimination including police-on-police racialized brutality, and police surveillance of political leaders and civic activists.[39]

The speaker choosing to describe the history of violence as an effort to secure *compliance* gives a nuanced description of complex modalities of instrumental force that also references the objects pursued – violence or the threat of violence – to establish and reinforce relations of power. The most recent event in Greensboro reflecting the operation of power – complex means of control with systems of surveillance – was unfolding the night before and the day of the second convening. A

[33] http://www.history.com/topics/greensboro-sit-in
[34] http://library.uncg.edu/dp/crg/topicalessays/blackpowermovement.aspx
[35] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greensboro_massacre
[36] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greensboro_massacre
[37] http://www.soc.duke.edu/NC_GlobalEconomy/textiles/overview.shtml
[38] http://www.yesweekly.com/triad/article-13245-latin-kings-indictment-stuns-supporters.html
[39] http://coastal.news14.com/content/news/triad/699620/greensboro-announces--500-000-settlement-in-police-lawsuits

local *community-oriented, alternative, progressive* newspaper *Yes! Weekly* had released the results of an extensive investigation *"exposing infiltration and surveillance"* of progressive groups in the community. The report alleged that one of the Greensboro city council women considered most active in and supportive of progressive causes had for several years been receiving payments from the local police department to provide on-going intelligence with regard to planned activities of various progressive groups.[40] The reactions among participants in the dialogue process questioned the wisdom of going forward and the timing of the convening and almost derailed the entire dialogue process. Yet, there was no mention of it during the entire evening's dialogue process.

7.3.7 Forms of institutionalization.

To reiterate, one of Foucault's (1980; 1982) significant insights is that institutions are analyzed from the perspective of relations of power and not vice versa (p. 343). Forms of institutionalization are seen in "traditional conditions, legal structures, and matters of habit or fashion" (Foucault, 1994, p. 344). They are also seen in institutions that are closed off so that relations of power are internally defined within the system. The play itself and the patterns of residential segregation highlighted participants' awareness of these relations of power and further demonstrated the effectiveness of this model of dialogue in contributing to an analysis of power and ultimately to a plan of action for community change. The earlier discussion of the exchange in which the older actress, Will Etta, was teaching the younger African American actor, John, how to behave in the theatre and life was described as an example of a system of differentiation in which traditional status and privileges are reproduced often by apparent consent. It could equally be identified as a form of institutionalization**.** In forms of institutionalization, hierarchies established within a closed system define the relations of power and enforce and reinforce the system's own internally determined power regime. The theater is a quintessential example of institutionalization. A theater production is a relatively enclosed setting in which the director establishes the rules and determines the relations of power. At times relations of power in an enclosed system could either contradict or reinforce

[40] http://greensboroperformingarts.blogspot.com/2013/08/marikay-abuzuaiter-confidental-informant.html

the power and value dynamics in the larger society. The entire play – *Trouble in Mind* - could be understood as an exploration of the operation of and resistance to power through the hierarchy that operates in a theatre setting: constraints of the script, reign of the director, economic imperatives of employment, and a variety of other internally established rules. The idea that an experienced Black actress, because of experience and know-how, has more influence on the action of others than a young, wealthy, White woman who would certainly have more options in the broader society to exercise agency reinforces this notion that institutionalized power is distributed according to internally established rules and relations that can either reinforce, amplify, or resist some of the mechanisms of power in the larger societal context. Forms of institutionalization are sometimes embodied in legal structures such as segregated facilities and communities and access limited by law to certain governmentally provided benefits like health care and housing assistance. There are narratives and multiple discourses that surround those legal arrangements. Over time the relational patterns established by the legal structures become habitual so that even if the law is eliminated the relational patterns themselves become self-perpetuating and so embedded in the societal fabric that they appear unremarkable. The condition that is produced is given the imprimatur of normalcy. In another text I name these mechanisms for reproduction of societal conditions as *legacy* (the narrative) and *aftermath* (the structures) (Hooker & Czjaikowski, 2012). One form of institutionalization that often follows this pattern is residential segregation.

***Facilitator**: Perfect. You got something?*

***Female speaker #6**: I, yeah to add to that I just think we Blacks, Whites live such separate lives in Greensboro it's still a really segregated city. I would say and it could be self-segregation on part of some I don't know but I think historically it's a segregated city and people are afraid to cross over. And I think until we start living together we're never going to get together.*

***Facilitator**: Would you think of segregation as a problem or as a symptom of a problem?*

***Female speaker #6**: I think it's a vicious cycle, I think it's both. But I really think people can't learn to trust each other and to like each other until they know each other. You can't know someone if you don't live*

> *near him or her. Working together is not enough but it's, well I know I worked at [North Carolina] A&T [State University] for several years and felt that I was relatively close to some people there, but when we went home at the end of the day we went to opposite sides of Greensboro and didn't meet socially very much so - it's a big problem.*

This exchange continues to highlight the complexity that is unpacked by the FOUCAULDIAN ANALYSIS OF POWER. These speakers identified an historical instrumental mode – legal segregation – that produced separation and silos that reinforce the dividing practices of race. The concept of race, while socially constructed, is given the imprimatur of reality through the performative exercise of these instrumental modes. Over time that habitual relational pattern — performativity – is sustained by the *choices* of members of the community – self-segregation. And yet those seemingly self-conscious and self-motivated actions are described as reactions to other instrumental modes such as violence, economic status, and the systems of differentiation that position Blacks and Whites differently in society. This positioning is both discursive and physical. Here Austin's (1962) performative speech act and Butler's (1997a) performativity coincide. By the speech act of declaring a racial categorization, associated relational patterns are inscribed – power – and when those patterns are performed by apparently self-motivating forces – performativity as expression of desire – the policy no longer has to exist for the people to maintain the patterns that it was originally designed to establish - panopticism.

Those relational patterns take on a normative and even a preferred status that incorporates the embedded inequity. It is in resistance to those modes that the power is minimized, and yet the result of the operation of power is so ubiquitous as to become unremarkable. A Foucauldian power analysis through narrative restorative community conferencing extends participants' vocabulary and allows them to name this mechanism of power and also the potential modes of resistance.

7.3.8 Degrees of rationalization.

Hegemony – the stable predominance of a particular set of cultural, social, intellectual influences as shaping the actions of another group – is often understood as one aim of power. In seeking to consolidate the effects of mechanisms of power in a particular power regime, Foucault points towards the costs, the technology, and other resources used to maintain the operation and hide the mechanism of power (p.

344). Understanding the methods of deploying resources to reinforce and maintain power also unveils openings for action to reshape the effects of power.

The following exchange identifies many of the methods deployed, implies the costs and technology expended, and describes the results of rationalization. There is a complex description (duplicity), and then a simple description (a lie), and then a rational description (economics) all describing the same phenomenon. This exchange also happened in response to the facilitator's request to place a name on a primary problematic of Greensboro.

> ***Male speaker #4****: And I'm about to get deep here okay so work with me … the word that's probably in my mind is duplicitous.*
> ***Facilitator****: Duplicitous?*
> ***Male speaker #4****: Okay and we have to talk about that because Greensboro said we're not like the rest of North Carolina and the South. We're a progressive city and they're going through all of this I mean I think there is a progressive history here too and I don't want to knock it but I had a story earlier. You see 'cause I've been to Friendly Center and I stood at a check-out counter for half hour and nobody would acknowledge of it. And … in this progressive city people talk about entitlement because of race, because of their education or whatever makes me sick. Okay and so we got to fix that. See now when I go home and put on my jeans and my beat up sneakers, I don't get any respect: zero. Why? Because they're seeing I'm just another Black man? And so you could meet someone at Lowe's or whatever and get into a discussion and their reaction is: "Wow! You could speak. You're making sense; you're not tripping over the noun/verb agreement." Well, who are you, who do you think you are? You don't belong to the entitled group in this community right? And I think we dance around that all the time. So the very fact… you know for me the reason I come [*to this conversation*] is because I can indulge in intelligent conversations with people who would listen. Probably listen beyond my ratings or my gender but who will listen honestly. But that doesn't happen in a lot of places in the society and I talk to a lot of people you know at the police department we were talking about that earlier you know on all levels from chief on down, city council members on down. I go inside prisons I talk to the inmates; I talk to prisoners and workers about this stupid jail. And there is the sense of entitlement, because I'm White, because I think I had more education*

than you or because I come from the right pedigree I can just make decisions for other people behind me.

Facilitator*: So that sounded like a lot more than just duplicitousness. There were multiple ideas packed up in there. So I'm trying to make sure I don't miss of all them. There's "duplicitousness" and then what else is there?*

Male speaker #4*: You're not gonna charge me a fee for this right?*

[Laughter]

Facilitator*: Tonight is free.*

Male speaker #4*: Tonight is free yeah. There may be a lot of things but I want to focus on this duplicity.*

Facilitator*: So then let me just unpack it just a little bit okay? "Duplicitousness" is to suggest that there are multiple stories about Greensboro.*

Male speaker #4*: Yeah, they're all multiple stories.*

Facilitator*: Okay, right and one is a story that you want to put in the airport when you get off the plane.*

Male speaker #4: *A story that you want to put in the airport when you get off the plane, right? And there's a story about 1979* [massacre] *which we don't want to deal with. There is also a story about people sleeping under the trestles and bridges here. But no, we want to talk about Centre City* [technology innovation] *Park, right?*

Female speaker #1*: I want to talk about what brings economic vibrancy to this community. So we paint <u>that</u> picture.*

Facilitator*: Let me check something with you both. If that story were true, if that story about the Arts Center and "Center City Park" and all those other points if that story actually reflected <u>your</u> experience, would you want to tell that story? Would you want to live in a place that that story actually was true?*

Male speaker #4*: Yes.*

Female speaker #1*: Absolutely.*

Facilitator*: Okay.*

Male speaker #4*: Yes but I'm tired of being* ***invisible****. So I think it's, because that's been an issue for certain people in this society, right? You're here, but you're not here. You're here, but you're not counted. You're here but we don't want to hear your voice. Okay? We want you to stay in the background. You know, and part of - now I'm getting too ideological here, but I mean - you read, some people like* [Frantz] *Fanon,*

> *there has to be some kind of catharsis. There was one in this play: where* [Will Etta] *said "no!" Now, Fanon would say violence is the way that you become visible, and a lot of people do that. You know, but there are different ways, but that's part of the script. It's like you're here to serve me but don't get into my conversation 'cause you're not sitting at the table … [T]here are people in this community who we, the entitled people, want to keep invisible.*

This speaker's comments are reflective of and fully explained by Butler's (2009) conceptualization of *precarity*. Butler argues that there is a level beyond subjectivity that is of concern to marginalized communities – precarity. There is a problem when a person or community is called into being by a particular performative speech act. The power is deeply felt in the sense that the person or community becomes both subject to the power that calls them into being, existing within the terms of that call, and also dependent on the call for the person or community's actual existence. The danger of precarity, though, is that there is no call made and so the person or type of person or entire community is not called into existence on any terms. It is this deeper danger that the speaker references and the desire to be called into being.

The above referenced conversation continued with the following exchange:

> ***Male speaker #7****: I'm really into simplicity.* [This is discursive positioning in relationship to the past speaker.] *And there is I think a lie of this community.*
> ***Facilitator****: There's a …?*
> ***Male speaker #7****: A <u>lie</u> of this community. That Greensboro is one thing and Greensboro is a reality. And I think that there is something anti-aspirational about Greensboro and that those who aspire to change it run into … are instantly labeled trouble-makers. And the work of changing becomes so hard that you ultimately you get worn down. I've seen that from a lot of people who I admire in this community. That you try to engage in confronting the lie to engage in dreaming of something better, wears people down. And I see in people I respect, generations of people I respect in this community: weariness. That's heart-breaking, because I do. I was just at a conference in New York and people are like: "Greensboro has this great progressive record." And I'm like, "Mmmm, Not so much."*

Facilitator*: And so there is a, there is an image of the city that was being constructed for public consumption, which doesn't necessarily align with a reality that many people have of Greensboro. And there are ways in which protecting that image is really significant and important. So that if, in fact, you bump up against it in certain ways, you can either be, you said I think punished for confronting the lie or isolated, silenced, which is what you were saying made invisible, there's an apathy that results. There's, it may well be that in service of that image, segregation and separation and silos are really important because if we all got together and spent too much time together and started comparing notes, we might notice that the image itself didn't have what…*
Male speaker #7*: And I think also that Greensboro does it so cleverly because it isn't as blatantly ugly as it is some other places. So if Atlanta is "the city too busy to hate", then we are "the city too polite to bother". And that we get away with a pretense that is as long as, that would be very, it's very easy for a certain group of people to live within that pretense.*
Male speaker #4*: And let's be clear about this, there are many Blacks in this community who feel they are entitled, right? And buy into this and say to all these trouble-makers: "Don't rock the boat! It's good here."*
Female Speaker # 1*: It's the myth that you buy into especially when you are in a middle class family and they've aspired to assimilate to the community. There is a somewhat of a bit of don't rock the boat mindset. So I grew up in the 60s. I've marched in the sit-ins. You know, I did all of that stuff, but yet, when we made it, don't rock the boat you know, why are those people doing that. Those people are you.*
Female Speaker # 2*: Because we really didn't make it at all.*

This exchange presents a complex consideration of degrees of rationalization, the response of the predominant narrative forces to resistance, and the impact of force on the actions of others. The notions of *duplicity* and the *lie* – Foucault describes this as *the ruse* — describe the ways in which the dominant narrative of Greensboro as a progressive city contrasts with the lived experience of many of the participants. Resources are deployed to protect this image, such as the entire marketing apparatus of the city and the chamber of commerce. They create displays at the airport and other points of entry to cast the city in a particular light, and to recruit newcomers and visitors into a particular narrative of the city.

In addition to the macro-deployment of economic forces and the instrumentalities of governance to present the image, there are also many applications of economics and the (de)legitimization of certain voices to protect the dominant narrative. This occurs through the deployment of major cultural institutions to legitimize certain voices and delegitimize others. The reference to "not wanting to talk about 1979" summarizes a debate taking place at the local civil rights museum. The museum had run into financial difficulties and a narrative developed as to how that financial difficulty was resolved. The museum had for some period presented an exhibit of the *history* associated with the November 1979 march and killings and the subsequent Truth and Reconciliation Commission. All of that material was removed from public exhibition spaces in the museum within a few weeks of the announcement that the City Arts Fund and two major local philanthropies had provided the Museum with the bridge capital needed to continue operations. These two occurrences connected and for many explained the operation of power through the instrumental modes of power and the control of certain voices.

This exchange also describes the interconnected workings of several instrumental modes of power – if you don't cooperate we will punish you economically. At the same time these mechanisms were being named by some participants, others acknowledged that they had acquiesced to that form of power and described how traditional status and privileges had been protected. Female speaker #1 described her choice to acquiesce to the economic forces – i.e., not to "rock the boat"- as a pattern of performativity given to her as a child by her parents, which also reflects how socializing institutions work to reproduce the relations of power. Even as she described resistance activities she and her family had been involved in – the sit-ins, and all that – she also described competing forces of personal comforts and potential economic success, competing narratives of individual gain and community solidarity as resisting the resistance. The teaching of her parents and the *desire* of her family *to assimilate* represents one of the mechanisms of subjectification that Foucault identified and that I have previously discussed. Traditional teachings pass on and maintain the statuses and privileges given by the operation of dominant narratives. There is also a way in which Butler (2009; 1997a) would describe this passing on of the performative as the parents

"being spoken" by the discourse or, following Deleuze, living in a trajectory shaped by the intersection of the dominant narratives.

Several speakers reference a variety of attempts to resist the dominant narrative and unveil alternative stories. They also speak of the work of narrative and instrumental forces to resist the widespread exposure of alternative possibilities and the effects such struggles have on the resisters: *weariness*, *apathy*, resignation, *city too polite to bother*, and *invisibility*. At the micro and relational level, many participants highlighted the active ways that *power brokers* in the city would actively work to isolate those who told a story other than the dominant narrative, especially when those working to share the alternative story were White (Thandeka, 2000).

Considerations for future facilitation: In order to fully map the operations of power in communities, this exchange would provide an excellent basis from which to share stories. Community members might be asked in smaller groupings (two to five per group) to describe in greater detail experiences of *weariness* or *invisibility* or of the performance associated with *assimilation*.

7.4 Summary of Power Analysis

The models of inquiry employed – narratively modified focused conversations and narrative restorative community conferencing – were conceptualized as vehicles to introduce social constructionist and narrative framing into a large-scale community change effort. The use of the play as a *third thing or Freirian code* and conversational center piece allowed for the introduction of *performance of community* as a metaphor for analyzing community context and also as a way of unveiling openings for action.

Michel Foucault is among the theorists acknowledged as contributing significantly to social constructionist thought and especially to the role of narrative and discourse in the experience of reality and the perception of agency for individuals and groups. Foucault's framing of the operation of knowledge/power and resistance to its effects is central to much social constructionist thought (Gergen K. J., 2009a) as well as to the practice of narrative therapy (Monk, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996), narrative mediation (Monk & Winslade, 2013; Winslade, 2006; Winslade & Cotter, 1997; Winslade & Monk, 2001), narrative psychiatry (Mehl-Madrona, 2007; 2010), and narrative and discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Parry & Doan, 1994). The models of dialogue introduced in this project allowed

the facilitator to investigate the text of the conversation through the lens of a Foucauldian-framed archaeology of knowledge/power relations that shape the community.

What participants did, unawares, was a thorough power analysis. This proved to be possible even though neither the facilitator nor the participants were familiarized with the Foucauldian framing before the conversation. This outcome reinforces the benefit of these two models for future application in seeking to utilize a fully-formed narrative mediation model for large-scale community change. The externalizing and mapping process in narrative conferencing allows people to distinguish between the operation of power relations and the instruments and results of power; even if not specifically asked to talk in those terms. They could also identify their own performativity and how it was informed by and reproductive of the relations of power that they seek to undo.

Effective community action processes allow participants to fully discuss their concerns and develop plans for action in ways that do not increase division and the personal animus that often accompanies lived experiences of discrimination, oppression, and marginalization. Both processes used in this effort – narratively modified focused conversations and narrative restorative community conferencing – allowed the issues to be named in terms that were externalized, performative, and non-divisive and could ultimately serve as a basis of shared agreement on modes of action.

These processes also resulted in a problem-naming that could be inviting and instructive for people experiencing the community from multiple perspectives vis-à-vis the operation of power. Most participants in the conversations were community leaders who had worked across a variety of community segments. However, this does not in any way reduce the often very stark differences of lived experience that these participants had vis-à-vis power in community. While some participants by virtue of their demographic background (race, gender, access to economic resources, education) could seemingly elect how they engaged the power dynamics in the community, others felt constrained in their range of action because those same demographic categories.

When the problematic of the community is characterized as external to any specific person or group and primarily discussed in terms of range of available action

and agentic options, those perceived as benefitting from the current manifestations of the relations and modes of power in the community could engage the problem from a non-defensive, community-engaged posture. This next section describes what emerged in the narratively modified focused conversation and narrative restorative community conferencing processes regarding the performative nature of the problematic.

7.5 What Emerged Through this Engagement Model

In addition to investigating the text of the conversations to determine whether an effective contextual and power analysis emerged, it is helpful to consider other beneficial results that emerged from this model of conversation. As a conflict resolution practitioner, community builder and organizer, I found that four outcomes held significance and interest for me and, I believe, added value for the longer term community change effort. First, and probably most significantly, the problematics were externalized and, therefore, located in terms of a performative as opposed to an essentialist framing. Externalizing the problem and then mapping the responses to the problems highlights the idea of *conflict-saturated story and does not render persons as problem people.* Secondly, infusing the conversation with the *performance metaphor* reinforced this location of the problematic as outside the people. Problems previously characterized as *the lived experience of racial difference* could be alternatively described as performative responses to a set of conditions in the community dealing with the community staging, lighting and script – not as a characteristic of the actors. This practice does not reinforce or affirm dividing practices. Minimizing the divisiveness and defensiveness is the basis for these conversations, and it increases the likelihood of building cross-boundary alliances (Cobb, 2013). The third significant outcome of the process is that there was the beginning of an *initial shifting of discursive positions* or, following Deleuze, establishment of lines of flight and thereby limited options for effective individual and collective action were reconsidered. Deconstructive processes that supported these shifts include gently undermining the certainties on which conflict feeds and invited participants to view the plot of the dispute from a different vantage point. Finally, the introduction of the performance and acting metaphors also allowed for a framing for both listening and questioning that was highly deconstructive and at the

same time not confrontational. I will briefly consider each of these outcomes with examples from the two conversations.

7.5.1 Externalizing the problem.

Externalizing creates space for participants to consider their individual and collective identities as a set of interwoven performatives as opposed to internal and irreducible qualities of a particular person or group. This positioning in relationship to the problem increases the range of options for action without vilifying any particular group or person. It also minimizes the sense of apathy and inertia that often accompany narratives of disenfranchisement (Nelson, 2001). The following exchange highlights the way in which the new way of speaking about a community problematic was at first resisted and then a participant's perspective shifted to understand and adopt this externalizing and performative framing:

> ***Female speaker # 7:*** *So I realized that I'm not sure why we have to just accept what you said that "the people are not the problem". And I can accept it on the level that this is not necessarily an individual problem, but I feel that if we say it's not a people problem then how do people solve it.*
> ***Facilitator****: No. I haven't said it's not a people problem in the sense that people can't solve it. I said people aren't the problem.*
> ***Female speaker # 7:*** *Okay. What does that mean?*
> ***Facilitator****: Because if, if [people] are the problem, then my way of dealing with it is either to force [them] to change or to remove [them] in order to make a situation better.*
> ***Female speaker # 7:*** *Right.*
> ***Facilitator****: My sense is that if you were trying to create a cooperative model of engagement and development and you locate the problem inside of a person – actually see* [the problem] *as part of their essence, they don't actually have the capacity to work with you to cooperate to address whatever the thing is. And it doesn't allow for them to be inconsistent in a positive way.*
> ***Female speaker # 7:*** *Right.*
> ***Facilitator****: And so I said the people aren't the problem. There is a problem.*
> ***Female speaker # 7:*** *Right.*

> ***Facilitator****: And it may actually be mostly demonstrated or manifested by someone's behavior or another's reaction to that problem. Right? You may experience it very different but the person himself isn't the problem cause if the problem is their essence.*
> ***Female speaker # 7****: Right.*
> ***Facilitator****: Then …*
> ***Female speaker # 7****: I'm a hundred percent with you on that I'm only thinking of your reaction. Your interaction with Speaker # 4 and the idea that misappropriation couldn't be the problem cause people have to do the misappropriating and I was thinking that it's not necessarily an individual problem. I don't think it's a personality problem but it can be a behavioral problem.*

The summing up of that portion of the conversation reflects the speaker's shift to (or highlighting the way that they) identify the problem as performative (*behavioral*) in nature and not as an essential/totalizing aspect of a person's being. This is an important aspect of framing a conversation about an issue as sensitive as marginalization or oppression or unequal identity. These conversations are often very tenuous and tension-filled or tension-producing, but the performative framing allows the interactions to be action-oriented. The above conversation continued as follows:

> ***Male speaker # 6****: Okay. Well, let me try and connect that with what* [female speaker above] *is saying. Well I think over here we are saying inside myself I become or at least I act like something I don't want to be.*
> ***Facilitator****: Mh hm* (positive).
> ***Male speaker # 6****: Because I feel like I have to be a certain way according to societal principles and so the problem can be partly inside me without being of my essence or maybe not even in me but just the way I react.*

This comment reflects that at least one other participant was also reflecting on the externalized location of the problematic. It presented a fairly pronounced shift in one participant's thinking on the location of the problematic. His remarks recognized that he himself is responding to a problematic that is external and not a personal flaw in his character. This personal recognition might allow him to recognize that others – especially those that he previously vilified in a totalizing way — might also be simply reacting to factors external to themselves. And this in turn might open more options for co-action with those that were previously *Othered*.

In a later portion of the same conversation, another participant also recognized how broader discursive forces, which he languaged as *ideology*, could invite many people to participate in the production and reproduction of features of the community they might disagree with and even features that do not benefit them or a social group that they are identified with. Locating the problem in discursive forces, ideology or community narrative, allows for a shared problematic that creates a different lived experience.

> ***Male speaker #4****: Okay which I kind of see where you are driving us. It could be, it could be a custom that is here and I make the argument that because I adhere to that custom I'm going to like* [another speaker] *said … "be compliant"****.*** *I'm going to adhere to the local customs. It could be an ideology_you know that has lasted for, I don't know, decades or centuries.*
> ***Facilitator****: Centuries … Right?*
> ***Male speaker #4****: And we buy into it and the only reason it has any force is because we do buy into it. So we change the script of the ideology or the custom then the behavior could change.*
> ***Facilitator****: So you say "change the script" and one of the issues in the play was …*
> ***Female speaker #2****: The actual script …*
> ***Facilitator****: Right!! The script required conformity to a certain way of being and I think there is something else out there that we follow that causes us to live into a script, a story, a narrative. I think that most people come to Greensboro, in fact, get a narrative.*

This exchange also demonstrates one of the values of having grounded the conversation about community in the metaphors of *theatre and performance*. Participants had a general understanding of how theatre works and a recent opportunity to see how it works and could then draw metaphorically on the various components of a theatre production – in this instance *the script*. The variation in personal and professional exposure to communication and literary theory might limit full participation in a direct conversation about the effects of discourse and discursive positioning in a community. However, the performance and *community as theatre* metaphors allowed a metaphorical discussion of discursive power and its impact on performance. This metaphorical reference could later be used as

"scaffolding" (White, 2007) action in a community, which may require at some point additional discussion of the concepts of discourse, positioning, power, and so on.

As discussed in Chapter II, there is a clear distinction between discursive position, social roles, and the performativity of identity. The performance metaphor invited participants to see that there is a background script and an invisible director. The script only provides a certain range of actions to perform your role (discourse); the director has particular ways he or she wants you to play the role (discursive position call); the actor will either accept or refuse the director's direction (positioning theory); and if they play the role the same way repetitively that becomes their identity (performativity). The beauty of the theatre metaphor is that it creates a safe and playful space in which participants can be invited to change the way they play their roles. Performing in new ways invites new reactions and new patterns could be formed if the new way of acting is sufficiently repetitive.

7.5.2 Characterization of the problematic.

Another value added by this approach was that the framing of the dialogue allowed participants to discuss the lived experience of race in terms of performance, performativity, and perceived range of action and not as essential characteristics of people themselves. The problems previously characterized as the lived experience of racial difference were described in terms of responses to a set of conditions in the community. This aspect of defining a problem is encouraging in light of the statement often attributed to Albert Einstein: *"Problems cannot be solved at the same level of thinking that caused them."*

A summary of how the participants described the primary problematics of Greensboro is contained below. Here, I tried to reflect the language used to describe the complex problematic that I was hearing from them up to that point.

> ***Facilitator****: So from what I've heard, I think that you all have done a great job of naming some of the problematics: there's fear, possibly some ignorance, mistrust. There's the duplicitousness around the image of a progressive mystique. And if you confront that image or the sense of duplicity around it, then there's a pushback of the whole power structure that seeks to preserve a particular image. And so there's a weariness that comes from that. This results in mistrust, insularity, the power, the fear and some of the things that it produces, are: separation; silos: ineffective communication: separate social spheres: an unwillingness or a lack of*

> *tolerability for the other: a kind of segregation; an apathy; a whole community that's 'too polite to bother' with some of these concerns. Some of this, you know the fear, the mistrust, the inability to connect, also results in a lack of a good vocabulary for relating to and continuing to process this stuff so there is continuing misunderstanding. And then there are certain groups for whom, silencing, a lack of political engagement, and even invisibility occur … All this creates an anti-aspirational atmosphere to some extent.*

In a narrative mediation or narrative therapy process, individuals involved in the process would be invited to develop their own full description of the problematic conflict narrative and then map their relationship to it. In this larger community dialogue process, the conflict narrative was developed in a collective setting with every member contributing to the nuancing of the narrative. The entire relationally-articulated narrative is then offered back to the entire group for continuing development, refinement and validation. Because individual and collective identities are formed out of the network of relatedness and relational patterns in the community, it is appropriate to articulate a narrative of community problematic in a collective model like the one used in this effort. This also follows what Ochs and Capps (1996), following Ricoeur, call the "*configurational dimension* of narrative, in which the narrative itself construes a 'significant wholeness out of the otherwise scattered events'" (pp. 25-26). What I offered back to the participants was a summary of the descriptors they had offered during the course of the larger conversation. One of the most intriguing features of this description of community problematics is the very minimalist reference to *race* as a way of describing or understanding the problematic. The gathering was convened to consider ways to improve the lived experience of *racial difference* in the community, and yet the descriptions were primarily performance-focused and non-race referent. My sense is that this is not an attempt to minimize the differential lived experience of race and ethnicity in the community as much as it is an effort to generate new language that was both descriptive and accessible. Because the languaging was descriptive and accessible, different participants' experiences could be shared and examined. Possibly because people treat race as an inherent and essential aspect of a person, when the assertion is stated that *the people are not the problem,* then dialogue participants don't reference race.

This process outcome adds value to planning for community action in contrast with processes that describe a lived experience in terms of *opinions*, *feelings*, and *attitudes*, such as the focused conversation model or other models of dialogue. Descriptions internalized in this way are often accompanied by internalized and totalizing descriptions of others such as *racist*, *prejudiced*, or *privileged*, which often emerge in discussions of socially constructed divisions like race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or nationality or citizenship status. The value added is that in opinion and feeling-focused processes the origin and basis for the individual's interpretation are not available for examination or challenge; therefore, there is only limited availability either for shifting, creating dissensus, or building a consensus for co-action.

The processes introduced in this study allow discussion of difficult behaviors in performative terms and allows for a subsequent strategy to alter reactions to problems or alter the conditions that create the problem but essentially embraces the people. The problematic description above also allows people to notice that, regardless of race, people are reacting to the same sets of issues. The range of performances in response to the problem may be different and may in fact be shaped by the learned performance of their identity, but both identity and community are complex sets of performances that can be shifted towards a more full and equitable range of performative options for all members.

There were other examples in which the problematic was cast in terms of performance and response to conditions in community as opposed to an essential character of the people themselves. Two such examples are

Example 1

Male speaker # 4*: And let's be clear about this, there are many Blacks in this community who feel they are entitled, right? And buy into this and say to all these trouble-makers: "Don't rock the boat, its good here."*

Female speaker # 1*: It's a myth that you buy into especially when you are in a middle class family and they've aspired to assimilate to the community, there is a somewhat of a bit of don't rock the boat. So I grew up in the 60s. I've marched in the sit-ins. You know, I did all of that stuff, but yet, when we made it, I was the first to say, "Don't rock the boat," you know, a lot of those people are saying that and it turns out that, "those people" are you and me, you know.*

Female speaker # 2*: Because we didn't make it at all.*

The following exchange describes the reaction to persons acting outside of the perceived performative range for a certain aspect of their identity and then the notion of how relations of power reinforce that particular performance.

Example #2

> ***Female Speaker# 6****: Two things. One is I feel like this, we all lack a good vocabulary to speak about this. So we would all be very articulate in everything else we speak about, but when it comes to these issues and the various parts, that there is something. There is a stuttering and a stammering and just kind of discomfort. You just don't - we're not fluent in speaking about these issues and we're afraid of being misunderstood or you know, we just don't have practice. And that's one thing…*

This idea speaks to the ways that language shapes our performance and gives meaning and reality to the experience we are having. It also highlights the lack of response to conditions in the community that is not attributable internal, non-verifiable aspect of people's personality like will or intention (denial and racism). Rather, the problematic is characterized in relational and performative framings – lack of vocabulary.

Consideration for future facilitation --When the participants were talking about the play, they had a shared, specific, and limited set of observations on which they could comment. A theater production also begins by establishing an agreed upon context and starting point for meaning making. When participants described the various problematics in their community, they rarely had the same set of shared, specific and constrained observations. In future processes, there might be attention paid to creating a shared set of observations. On the other hand, any limit to the observational field means the researcher is already shaping the possible understandings of the community.

7.5.3 Problematic is destabilized.

The process also allowed an initial deconstruction of certain discursive positions that limited a sense of agency and thereby limited options for effective action. Deconstructive listening processes involve gently undermining the certainties on which conflict feeds and invites participants to view the plot of the dispute from a different vantage point (Winslade & Monk, 2001, p. 72). Often in a conflict-saturated narrative, the problematic is described in structuralist terms with essentialist descriptions of all the actors. The language used to give life to the problems presents

the problems as real and fixed and people are just the way they are. Structuralist notions of the operation of power are one way of hiding essentialist descriptions of people that locate the problematic inside the character and essence of the individual, which also has a fatalistic determinism built in. This approach to describing and analyzing a problem or conflict leaves limited options for action. The current conversational model allows participants to resist a structuralist or essentialist analysis and to re-imagine in ways that create openings for action.

The best and clearest example of this deconstructive process happened when the participants were discussing a section in the play about which they had no information and had to fill in their own meaning. The meaning making process required them to resort to their own narrative streams. In this instance each seemed to resort to a similar framing that suggested racism and power were fixed, immutable and immovable. Near the end of the play, there was a major argument and much conflict. After significant back and forth between the Director and the main African American woman character, Will Etta, who was resisting playing the part the way the Director was urging (resisting his position call). The Director and the director's assistant went into a back office. Although the Director and his assistant were stage visible, there was no audible conversation or action taking place. They stood still in a *frozen* pose while dialogue and activity was taking place with the other actors exchanging on the stage. After a period the director's assistant emerged from the office and announced that rehearsal was cancelled for the rest of the day and the director would call them all back in the morning.

The infusing of the community as theater and performative metaphor began in the discussion of the play. During the practice dialogue in which participants applied the narrative conferencing model to the play, I disrupted the *natural* interpretation of the background and unspoken action of the play to invite a different narrative framing. This indicates another value of Freire's code and Palmer's *third thing*. When discussing the *third thing*, the facilitator's efforts at deconstructive listening can be a bit more assertive without necessarily causing participants to shut down or lose trust in the facilitator or the process; the participant is not misinterpreting his or her own life but is invited through deconstructive listening to consider other interpretations of a fictional theatre production. This exchange during

the practice dialogue was a precursor for a discursive shift reflected in a later comment during the dialogue about Greensboro.

> ***Male Speaker # 7**: A good successful play typically relies upon not always with the cast that can pass the ball, can pass lines there are fun and they are great to work together and that was broken in a lot of ways as a result the play potentially suffers not the senses of an ideal play it's their distrust from the cast it creates some horrible moments on stage.*
> ***Facilitator**: Okay. So distrust. Give me one example of where the distrust actually showed up.*
> ***Male Speaker # 7**: Well certainly, when the director went with his other crew into the back room to have the power conversations.*
> ***Facilitator**: Okay.*
> ***Male Speaker # 10**: Which made a big statement to say, "You all are the problem." I mean he used a lot of that language and just it's devastating to trust.*
> ***Facilitator**: Just out of curiosity do you know what conversation actually happened in that back room?*
> ***Male Speaker # 10**: Based on what you shared prior to going into that room I feel like 80 percent certain.*
> ***Facilitator**: Okay all right. But because you have an expectation of what's supposed to happen back there and will decide and will fill it in. 'Cause it could also be that he went to the back room just completely fell apart saying "I cannot believe that my big break is falling apart on me!" [He could have a] breakdown and say, "I have no idea what to do. I'm going to need a moment to regroup. Can you all go home I'll call you tomorrow?"*
> ***Male Speaker # 7**: Or he could have said, "I've been a racist jerk my whole life oh my God I'm going to come back and go…"*
> ***Facilitator**: Alright good. [Male Speaker # 8] give me an example of where pain showed up in the, there was pain inviting somebody to do something or say something or be in a certain way?*
> ***Male Speaker # 8**: Well, a lot in the older Black woman's voice, her voice says so much in and of itself. But I'm just thinking about this instance of my understanding of what happened when he went back in the room, was, he was saying something like, to his buddy. He went back to the; with him "Look, I can't handle these people. In other words, it is too painful for me. I can't handle these people. You have got to go out*

there and do something about it." This in effect, kept the power structure going.

Facilitator*: So I want to know this something for just a second, is there any indication of what that conversation is back there?* (pointing to the participant who was the actual director of the play that was being discussed)

Male Speaker # 7*: No.*

Facilitator*: No. So, one of the things that happens, one thing that we do is we make it up.*

Female Speaker # 5*: Exactly.*

Facilitator*: Right? And so, the conversation that we are imagining is happening back there is a conversation that we imagine happens based on our relationship with and among those characters, right? So, we actually make it up. So I'm wondering whether the conversation that we create that happened in the back room was also a reflection of a lack of our own trust, or an expression of the fact that we do not actually trust that type of guy. We know that that's what they do when they get to back rooms. That's our lack of trust, we have a sense of what the demands of a capitalist system are or we have a certain fear. We might even have a race and gender archetype that will make this White man who was in charge the kind of guy that would go back room and do that kind of stuff, right? So we make that up.*

Male Speaker # 8*: But I can argue-*

Facilitator*: Yeah, we can argue with you.*

Male Speaker # 8*: I would argue the whole structure of the play says that is what he's talking about in the back room.*

Facilitator*: Right.*

Male Speaker # 4*: History tells us that if it is meant to be you know. See that's where the history thing comes in. You know, somewhere in our memory, you know someone says "hey, my grandma told me about this." So you know, I told you some of that stuff before." You know, so we fill in our life.*

Facilitator*: Right. That's good so, history, the shared history and all of the pain, the fear, the archetypes that show up to that?*

The process of slowing down a conversation to the granular level helps people to see how they make meaning and make decisions. This process also invited participants, and not just the facilitator, to participate in the deconstruction process, which allowed a conversational space to open up that included the possibility of

repositioning. Winslade and Monk suggest that this repositioning can be done simply by asking someone the meaning of a word. The curiosity allows the speaker to deconstruct the original positioning and to move away from a place of diminished agency. By allowing this analysis to happen in group format, people are building and re-shaping community just by testing the stories that are told against their own experiences and offering.

> ***Male Speaker # 8****: I think all of the mistrust and the pain here is held in place by a power structure. Okay and until the people who are on the bottom of the power structure, which is us, come together in the strongest way to where we can build a collective that can overthrow the structure … and when I think of taking on the power structure myself or just when I worked and fought to take on the power structure, I individually was frightened.*
> ***Female Speaker # 4****: Why are we on the bottom?*
> ***Male Speaker # 8****: Well we're not, a lot of us are in the middle okay and we're in the middle we're on the bottom and here I say that versus people in the power structure there that's what I'm trying to … only when we come together and with the power, the vulnerability and receiving it well brings, are we able to get a collective strength enough to keep us from being, to enable us to say we're going to change the structure.*

The end of this exchange shows great promise for the possibility of discursive positional shifts or identifying new lines of flight as a result of this model of conversation. The speaker – Male #8 – has been heavily involved for an extended period in a model of community engagement that is based on an essentialist framing of people and structuralist framing of power. His brief acknowledgement of a potentially relational model of power presents an opening for significant and lasting change that will be valuable for major community collective actions.

7.6 Chapter Summation

The intention of many community-based participatory action research projects is to address a circumstance in which the participants' lived experience of the community is considered by those community members as being *inappropriate*, *not ideal*, *unacceptable*, often described as *unjust* or *oppressive*. Most lived experiences in communities, which are generically labeled along the spectrum of greater or lesser *injustice*, can also be understood as an operation of relations of power that result in some being advantaged by having voice in crafting the narrative

into which they live and others being disadvantaged by neither being heard nor having voice (Cobb, 2013, p. 241). When those disadvantaged others are in the same or a similar identification pattern or social group, the relations of power are described by terms such as racial or ethnic or religious *discrimination*, or *sexism*, or *racism*, or *heterosexism, able-ism, patriarchy*, and similarly value-laden framings. The *isms* each reflect a schism or experiential demarcation along some socially constructed boundary line.

Members of a community live with their daily experiences. While the experiences have a reality – there is a *there* there – the experiences are interpreted inside of and lived out of the various narratives that they apply to make sense of the complex manifestations of power that shape their identity and their understanding of the community. A great challenge of a community-building process is to create a context in which community members come to a view of their community from which they are most effectively able to reconsider, respond to, and reform the relations of power operating in their lives in ways that might alter their experience of the circumstances.

Preparing members of a community to respond to and transform specific lived experiences is best pursued by highlighting the relations of power and mechanisms by which power/knowledge operate to shape their specific context. The community engagement processes utilized in this effort were designed to be practical and action-focused processes that produced an effective power analysis. The resulting knowledge/power analysis could then serve as a basis for action strategies without requiring participants to study, learn, or even necessarily understand the mechanism of power and their operation as detailed by Foucault, Butler, and others. The combination of a narratively modified focused conversation and narrative restorative community conferencing processes developed for this study shows great promise in conducting that type of Foucauldian power/knowledge analysis. The outcome of these processes suggests that the processes themselves produced the power analysis without the facilitator's intervention and encouragement to do so. I support this claim with the fact that as the facilitator I did not learn of the power analysis model until after the conversations were concluded. Although as facilitator, my presence and actions can never be divorced or separated from the outcome, it is at least possible to assert that I did not steer the conversation towards an analytical

framework that I had yet discovered. It is unlikely going forward that I would be able to make the same claim in a future application of these processes. Yet, there is some indication that the processes themselves could yield such an outcome without the facilitator's full knowledge of the Foucauldian framing.

A second important feature of community action is creating a process that allows participants not to increase the sense of division and personal animus that usually accompanies lived experiences of discrimination, oppression, or marginalization. The narrative restorative community conferencing model allowed issues to be externalized and named in performative and non-accusing and non-totalizing terms that could ultimately serve as a basis of shared agreement on modes of action from multiple perspectives vis-à-vis the operation of power. When the problematic of the community is characterized as external to any specific person, type of person, position, or group and as primarily performative, those perceived as benefitting from the current manifestations of the relations and modes of power in the community could engage the problem from a non-defensive, community-engaged posture. They are not positioned as *victimizers* in the struggle. The processes utilized in this study created the atmosphere and context in which participants could interrogate their lived experience and a sequence of open and honest questions through which to identify the mechanisms by which power operates. The process also enabled preliminary positional shifts.

All of these results, externalized non-divisive, action oriented naming, served as a backdrop for the next year of conversation among this group that resulted in the design of a communitywide dialogue process that they sought to implement.

7.7 Section Summary

The methods presented and analyzed in this section have several promising features. In Chapters IV and V, it was demonstrated that the process of developing the methods was affirmed by Turnbull's process for theory building. The models although designed to be practical also are embedded with several theoretical propositions:

- A constructionist perspective that highlights narrative and performativity creates the ideal platform for radical community change;

- The use of a play or other theatrical presentation as a third thing for conversation serves the dual role of problem-posing material and infusing the performative metaphor into community conversations;
- A conversation method that incorporates the hallmarks of narrative mediation can be the basis of a Foucauldian analytical process of unveiling the power/knowledge dynamics for a local community; and
- Granular communications is both a theoretical and a practical approach to conducting individual and collective conversations that contribute to deconstruction, discursive position shifting, narrative decompression, opening spaces for action, and charting new lines of flight.

The methods were formed in the intuitive and iterative fashion of a *bricoleur* allowing the context to direct the needs and the needs to direct the form of conversation. In the process of developing methods, a bricolagic approach was utilized. Each method had an internal bricolagic form, and the methods taken together also had a bricolagic quality. The analysis was also conducted in a bricolagic manner. The internal consistency and adherence to theory building was significant to establish the methodological validity. This also stood up well under Heikkinen's five principles of validation for narrative action research. Although the test was only limited to the two introductory conversations, each of which had limitations, the content of the conversations affirmed that the methods could produce the quality of narrative that could advance radical community transformation efforts.

In Chapter VIII, I will conclude this study by presenting a set of preliminary conclusions – what I can say so far. I will also describe what I recognize to be study limitations, implications for future research, and implications for practice.

CHAPTER VIII - *A PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION*

At this point, I offer preliminary conclusions, which is to say that this study is a step in a journey. In this chapter, I restate my philosophical framing, present an argument for the significance of this approach, and summarize the research I conducted as a method of illustrating what I was proposing and advocating. I also recognize the limits of my research. At the final stage of an inquiry – because this is a co-active meaning-making process – the inquirer is compelled to ask the community of readers and observers for feedback on the project. In the fourth section of this chapter, I will initiate that inquiry by identifying possible new approaches for research and stating what I can see as implications for practice. It will then be up to those who have read and considered these methods and this emerging theory to offer their initial reflections and later, after testing the methods and theory, to offer praxis-illuminated responses.

8.1 Framing – This is What I Want to Communicate

I was interested in developing engagement processes that lead to the experience of community in which socially constructed categories, such as race (but it could be gender, ethnicity, religion, weight, or any number of other constructs), are informative and yet not predictive or determinative of the quality of the lived experience of any person. Working in Greensboro, NC, I used the fiction of race (Smedley & Smedley, 2005; Solorzano, 1997) as my example.

My professional and personal life's journey have allowed me to work in a variety of circumstances and conditions all across the planet. As a conflict transformation practitioner, I have had the opportunity to work in regions around the planet where conflict is multi-generational and seemingly intractable. In circumstances of intractable conflict, there is most often an accompanying condition in which some socially constructed group is marginalized or has a distinctly less acceptable lived experience.

During the journey I described as a prelude to this work, I had primarily concerned myself with societies and communities that had experienced longstanding inequities across, what I now recognize to be, socially constructed categories. My work involved me in many approaches, including education, relationship building, dialogue, legal and policy-focused systems change, and *power*-based community organizing. As I developed an awareness of these contexts, I began to believe that

most, if not all, of the intractable conflicts could be understood better through understanding trauma and the role that unresolved trauma plays in the communities. My assessment was that societal inequities and systemic marginalization were the result of unresolved trauma. That led me to pursue a study of unresolved trauma and to try to develop mechanisms for mitigating its transmission (Hooker & Czjaikowski, 2012).

In that earlier work, I conceptualized the mechanisms for the multigenerational transmission of trauma as *legacy* – stories, folklore, mythology, and lies that are told to rationalize and justify inequity – and *aftermath* – the systems, structures, policies, and institutional arrangements – that maintain the inequities. This model took the best from several approaches to integrate the dimensions of history, healing, connection, and action as the four domains of work in mitigating and transforming historical harms. The model also utilized storytelling and narrative as the tool to be applied in all four domains (Bell, 2003; Mehl-Madrona, 2007; Okun, 2010). As I further and more deeply explored narrative beyond the dimension of storytelling (Nelson, 2001), I was introduced to the principles of social construction (Burr, 2003; Gergen K. J., 2009; Gergen & Gergen, 2003; Kuhn, 1996) and discourse (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Foucault, 1972).

8.1.1 Discourse.

In the current usage the concept of *discourse* extends beyond the range of text and conversation. Rather, *discourse* is used in the Foucauldian sense, as presented more fully in Chapter II, to describe the ways in which systems of thought, ideas, and attitudes operate to establish and maintain relations of power (Foucault, 1980). Each word has meanings that are informed by a network of other meanings; therefore, each sentence or text connects with other systems of meaning. This interconnected system of networks of meaning work together, according to Foucault, to hold in place certain structures, privileges, and relations of power.

In considering the conceptualization of discourse, I was also introduced to Foucault's (1980; 1982) conceptualization of *power*, which completely reoriented my thinking and approach to my work. A Foucauldian perspective is that the modes and operational allocation of power, in both its productive and repressive manifestations, is present in the discourses and construct each aspect of a person's identity. There are various *positions* a person can take up within a particular discourse. Because

discourse is both inclusionary and exclusionary – determining a range for thinking, observing, emoting, and acting – these discursive positions give rise to the range of performance options a person or community can possess and perceive themselves as possessing at any given time (even when the perception and the actuality may not be aligned). Personal power or sense of *agency*, therefore, can be understood relationally as a function of the intersections of the various perceived, received, and accepted or socially constructed performative ranges a person adopts in the relationships of any given context.[41] At any given time, the mixes of the individual performatives produced and reinforced within a particular cultural context become understood as the community. Those persons operating within the performative ranges prescribed by the various discourses are seen as insiders, and those who do not are outsiders or resisters that set the edges of the community.

8.1.2 Power.

Foucault's conceptualization of modern power – action acting indirectly on the landscape of possible actions of another – raises issues of the role of discourse and subjectivity in the dynamics of relatedness. This, in combination with my increasing understanding of social construction, allowed me to recognize that my previous approaches to work around race or ethnic, religious, or gender inequity were based in either positivist or structuralist philosophical stances. As I surveyed the field, I realized that most of the approaches being used are also situated in one, the other, or some combination of these two philosophical stances. One realization that encouraged my work was this: an evolution in thinking about social construction and identity (Alexander, 2012; Butler, 1997b; Eyerman, 2001; Ferrante & Brown, Jr., 1998) required an evolution in methods as well. One particular method that I saw as promising for community engagement was narrative mediation at the community level (Monk & Winslade, 2013; Winslade, 2006; Winslade & Cotter, 1997; Winslade & Monk, 2001). This was especially the case because what I had labelled in my earlier work as *legacy* seemed to have a connection to the ideas of discourse and the conflict-saturated narrative (White & Epston, 1990). I also recognized that *legacy* was discourse *speaking* people and *aftermath* was the institutional and relational manifestations of discursive power. My investigations suggested that the processes

[41] I wonder if there is a way to represent this in mathematical terms; not as algebra but as calculus?

for large-scale and multi-party narrative mediation had not yet been developed (Denborough, 2010).

8.1.3 Restorative justice.

The action dimension of my earlier work reflected the idea that, in addition to resolving conflict in communities, it would be essential to establish a sense of justice for the previous experiences of harm that had occurred to the marginalized populations in these communities. As a practitioner of restorative justice (Zehr, 1990, 2002), I had a sense that the guiding questions and principles of restorative justice would be applicable to whatever work occurred in communities. At the same time I was keenly aware of the limitations of restorative justice models (Weisberg, 2003), especially as related to multigenerational and long-standing societal injustice (Hooker, 2011). As I set out to establish new models for community engagement that incorporated constructionist and narrative principles, I wanted to keep the insights and guidance from an important tradition, like restorative justice.

8.1.4 Performance.

One of the earliest insights I gained from my reading and exploring the questions of race relations from a constructionist perspective is that race, as well as all other socially constructed aspects of our identity, is learned first through performance. I had a moment of clarity while sitting in the sun outside the Atlanta Botanical Gardens (described in Chapter I). I realized that before any of us as human beings have the language or know the (his)story, values, or any guiding principles of various aspects of our identity (race, religion, gender, ethnicity) we actually learn to perform the identity within our cultural context (Thandeka, 2000). Built into the learned performance is an embedded inequity – be that superiority, inferiority, marginalized-superiority, or whatever. When persons are born, their identity is given to them by the close-in socializing institutions and broader communities they are born into (Thandeka, 2000). The meanings associated with their gender, race, ethnicity, class, religious, and geographic identity markers, among others, are socially constructed and learned through their relationality with the people, socializing institutions, social and physical architecture, aesthetic, and other dimensions of the context in which they are formed (Butler, 1997a). These components of identity are socially constructed – that is, they are produced through both formal and informal relational practices as to the appropriate performance of

that category. For instance, in developing engendered roles, children are taught the types of behaviors appropriate for the socially assigned gender (the child does not have an initial say is this determination) — Boys don't do this, Girls don't play that, and It's okay for all children to do that. The specific details of a particular identity construct are always culturally and contextually given. Even in efforts at *empowerment*, when the instructions go against a cultural norm – Don't listen to them, girls can play any game they want— that instruction is offered in the presence of a presupposition about the absent trace of unexpressed cultural norms. The performance parameters are often given as a range so that there is not one uniform set of instructions. The broadness of the performance range and the multiplicity of available performances speak to the level of agency that a person experiences in response to the ways that the power of identity discourses shape their perceived present possibilities. The broader the range, the more experience of agency and vice versa.

8.1.5 Performativity.

Foucault's identification of discourse and subjectivity as formational for identity and constitutive of community eventually led me to the work of Judith Butler (1997a; 2011). Butler conceptualized performativity and power as subject-forming. To do this, she took as her starting point Austin's (1962) notion of performative speech acts, incorporated Althusser's (1971) doctrine of interpellation, and Foucault's (1980; 1982) formulation of subject and power with some references to Freud, and described the identity formation process in which the powers that persons resists are also the powers that formulate their very identity and therefore upon which they are in some ways dependent, but not determined (Butler, 1997a, p. 2). Butler's performativity was an important contribution in the sense that many of the ways people behave — their performances – are not a conscious and considered presentation of an essential self to the world. Rather, the ways of behaving are performative; they are created by and also they create the identity (Butler, 2011, 1997a, 1997b).

To speak of the performances of socially constructed identifying categories is quite different from thinking of their *performative* aspects. When discussing the distinction between *performance* and the *performative* aspects of gender, for instance, Judith Butler says:

> It is one thing to say that gender is performed and that is a little different from saying gender is *performative*. When we say gender is performed we usually mean that we've taken on a role or we're acting in some way and that our acting or our role playing is crucial to the gender that we are and the gender that we present to the world. To say that gender is performative is a little different because for something to be performative means that it produces a series of effects. We act and walk and speak and talk in ways that consolidate an impression of being a man or being a woman. (Butler, 2011)

While performances may help create and establish a person's persona, the complex mix of actions, attitudes, and so forth that combine to make up the *performative* have the added capacity to produce a series of effects. Chief among the effects produced by the performative of particular identity categories is an experienced sense of inequality. Almost invariably incorporated into the identity formation processes are inequalities with others that fall outside that particular grouping. Discourse works to include and exclude and then ascribe value and meaning to those boundaries. In addition to adding value, discourse creates an understanding of what action (action including, thinking, observing, and emoting) can be expected on either side of the boundaries. These inequalities, or differential agency statuses, can best be understood in terms of the performance ranges projected by each identity component. In any given context, identity components suggest an acceptable, reasonable, or normative range of behaviors. One category when compared to other related and mutually excluded categories is usually established with a broader or narrower performance range.

For instance, in the realm of play and make-believe, much younger people are perceived as having a broader range of available performances than would an older person. In this way, a very young person would often not be judged harshly for having extended conversation and *play time* with an imaginary friend, while an older person –even older youth — would be judged harshly, even labeled as abnormal or mentally ill depending on the extent to which their engagement with the non-visible interlocutor insinuated itself in their behaviors. By the same standards, an older person would be extended a broader range of performance than a younger person in areas of decision-making, like contracting, employment, participation in civil society, and being actively engaged in romance or war. This may explain why child soldiers

engage the imagination of world judicial and humanitarian bodies: the young people demonstrate that they can effectively prosecute a war and yet there is a globally understood but not universally accepted construction of youth that resists the harsh judgment that would otherwise extend to an adult for the same acts.

A person then, in any given moment, presents as and occurs at the intersectionality of the several different ranges of performance. In certain instances the given construction of gender or race or religion may either expand or constrict their perceived performance ranges. The perceived performance ranges are fluid depending on the context. Even as the range of performances or sense of agency may expand or contract, the overall performativity and the effects created are often less fluid because they are stabilized and reproduced through larger societal discourses. Often, there are laws, rules, cultural, institutional, and relational patterns that are put in place to reinforce and perpetuate the proposed performative range — for example, entering into contracts, being interrogated by police, choosing to marry (a specific instance of contracting or distribution of property rights), purchasing and consuming harmful substances like tobacco and alcohol.

The combined notion of performance and performativity is a holistic and all-encompassing notion, in the sense that even cognition and emotions are "culturally embedded, distributed among people, rooted not only in computational inferences, but also in an externally given and real world of physical objects, artefacts and cultural practices" (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p. 14). Individuals are socialized to speak, act, communicate, think, emote, and even observe and perceive in a specific range that has been consciously or unconsciously agreed to, routinized, and sometimes ritualized over time, as expressions of belonging to a particular grouping. Performances and performative patterns are also shaped in relationship to a variety of relations of power that act both from within and outside the community. Individuals are socialized into the performance patterns of a variety of different identity groups both by those inside and outside the particular groups. And yet that socialization is not determinative of actions. Rather, it informs the range of appropriate and expected action and resistance that is still possible.[42]

[42] There was an interesting exchange that happened after one of the debates among candidates for the Democratic Party's nomination during the 2008 campaign for the Presidency. One of the candidates, Ralph Nader, critiqued Barack Obama for his approach to the campaign. Ralph Nader is often identified as being White. Barack Obama's parents are a White American and a Black African Kenyan,

In order to construct a society in which people can experience equity – the perception of and actual access to an equal range of performative possibilities, or what Taliaferro et al. (2013) call "operationalized citizenship" – people must learn to perform equity. The performance of equity will take substantial practice and may be experienced as awkward because we have been formed pre-verbally to perform our identity in certain ways. The ideas of performance led me down the path of Erving Goffman's (1997) social-interactionist doctrine and role theory. I also considered the application of theater-styled games and approaches to conflict transformation and community problem solving (Boal, 1985; Cohen, Varea, & Walker, 2011; McCarthy, 2004). I was interested in developing a method that incorporated theatre and performance and was infused with the practices and principles of narrative mediation. Even as I thought to draw on performance-based models and metaphors, I was already aware that these methods had limits as far as their serving as a viable metaphor for understanding community (Wilshire, 1985). I also was learning of the important distinction between role performance and performativity.

People live into and live out of narratives and metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Nelson, 2001). Therefore, it was important to develop an engagement model that allowed people time to investigate their own narratives, the narratives of others, and the collective community narrative. In terms of conflicted communities, the transformation of meaning and relationships, related to the evolution of the narratives at the heart of a conflict, occurs over time, and requires engagement, interaction, talking, and collaborative meaning making. While it is the case that conflicts can be transformed without interaction between parties – time passes, new actors enter the scene, rewriting the narrative, creating new futures – in many cases conflicts are protracted, frozen in time, because there is no evolution of meaning.

---

and even though he had equal claim to both African and White American, Obama was considered by most people to be an "African American". Obama acknowledged in fact that African- American was probably the most accurate description of his heritage. Ralph Nader accused Barack Obama of running "an inauthentic" campaign. His primary evidence was that Obama's primary narrative was of hard work and education and humor as opposed to hard times, overcoming a violent past with a single parent, or growing up poor. Notwithstanding the fact that Obama was a Harvard graduate who had grown up in Hawaii and out of the country but rarely in impoverished settings, Nader was suggesting that the appropriate range of performances for an African American candidate should be described in terms of hardship and struggle and not hard work and joy. Obama was similarly criticized by the *Civil Rights* establishment leaders, who in many ways shared Ralph Nader's assessment of the appropriate range of performances for African American candidates. Ultimately, the performative results of the Obama campaign broadened the range of performances some would see for African Americans while for others the performative results *confirmed* that Obama was *not as Black as people might imagine and his candidacy should not be allowed to* **benefit** *from his blackness*.

Narratives must be told, in order to carry the meanings made from one generation to the next. By the same logic, narratives must be told for a population to evolve away from a particular understanding. However, telling the narrative is no guarantee that the narrative will evolve - its evolution depends on the conditions under which it is told and the manner of telling (Bell, 2010; Nelson, 2001; Cobb, 2013).

Theater creates an excellent metaphorical setting in which to try out multiple retellings of a particular story and to have permission to act outside of the range established by the dominant narratives or discourses of a particular community (Rohd, 1998). Community can be metaphorically depicted as a complex, dynamic, improvisational, and yet semi-scripted performance. It is also the case that new performance combinations in one part of the community or between a few players could unveil new possibilities of performance previously not possible from other discursive positions. Opening up new performative possibilities from the perspective of any one person begins to create openings for shifting the discursive positions that intersect in that performance. Doing this with a previously unfamiliar or inattentive audience has increased possibility for destabilizing positions and narratives. Operating inside this metaphor may open action for community builders, especially those who are interested in reshaping the impacts of the unequal effects of power.

8.2 Bringing It All Together

What we call reality is a socially constructed interpretation (Burr, 2003). Constructions are formed in discourse and discourse shapes our understanding and experience (Foucault, 1972; 1980). Discourse also shapes what we are willing or able to observe as we seek to make meaning. Performance is an aspect of how beings are communicated in the world and performativity created by various discourses and at the same time recreates the discourses that establish identity (Butler, 1997a). Narrative is a form of both sense-making and of transmission of discourse (Davies & Harre, 1990; Nelson, 2001; Bell, 2010). I wanted to create methods of community engagement that incorporated and advantaged these epistemological stances. I also realized that earlier and existing methods of addressing conflict-saturated narratives and inequitable communities had been based on positivist and structuralist thought. Newly developed methods should reflect an evolution to a constructionist and poststructuralist stance. While some principles drawn from other methods, like restorative justice, could still be valuable and should be incorporated, there were

limits to the current framing of restorative justice practice as well as limits to the *community as theatre* metaphor.

Narrative mediation was a promising approach that incorporated the notions of discourse, social construction and deconstruction in its principles and practices. I also was aware that these are complex, very theoretical, and philosophical ideas. In order to parse out the role of discourse and the performative nature of relations of power in a community, conversations would have to be slowed down and considered at the smallest – even at the granular – level and that would create the space to plant seeds of transformation. The viewing and discussion of the play was an opportunity to practice community analysis and also to infuse the theatrical metaphor without a formal presentation of either theory or practice. Modifying the focused conversation model to reflect and advance my emerging model of granular communications also allowed me to slow down the pace of inquiry. The task was to develop new methods of community engagement that took advantage of these understandings and did not require people to understand or even be presented with the theory in order for the methods to have their effects. Looking at the data that was developed from the first experience of the methods presented in this study, I believe I accomplished this task.

8.2 What I did

8.2.1 Process.

In 2011 and early 2012, I and a co-investigator conducted a series of independent and small group conversations among more than one hundred residents in the Greensboro, NC, and Piedmont Triad area. Participants in these interviews represented a wide demographic spectrum, including diversity of geography, race, class, public and private sector employment, age, and length of residency in the area. The conversations were convened to consider the question, "In light of the limited changes on the lived experience or the narrative of race relations in this community that resulted from the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, what, if anything, might a group do to improve both the lived experience and the narrative of racial relations in Greensboro?"

8.2.2 Methods.

In an effort to frame a conversation that might eventually consider the concept of the *performance of equality* and to introduce the broader metaphor of *community as theatre*, an opportunity was created for participants to have the

shared experience of attending a play produced at the local theatre *Trouble in Mind* by Alice Childress. Those that viewed the play were also invited to participate in a dialogue session on the evening following attendance at the play. For what turned out to be the first of two sessions, I reconceptualized the focused conversation model developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA.org) to incorporate a more constructionist approach and to reflect my emerging model of *granular communications*. The conversation could be considered successful by the measure of interest, willingness, and stated desire of the participants to meet again and continue in conversation.

As a follow-on to the first conversation, in response to participants' expressed wish to move towards action, I structured a second conversation framed as a narrative restorative community conference (Monk & Winslade, 2013), again reconceptualized for a collective conversation (Denborough, 2010), and structured to reflect principles of *granular communication* as described in Chapter III. I facilitated both conversations, and the conversations were audio- and video-recorded and transcribed.

My earliest intention had been to simply apply the narrative mediation process to a community dialogue. In my earliest professional life as a mediator, I was trained in a facilitative and interest-based model of mediation (Weitzman & Weitzman, 2000). After a few years, I began conducting large-scale, multi-party, public policy mediations. I was aware of the many process distinctions between interpersonal and multi-party mediations (Bunker, 2000). I thought I would be able to quickly make a shift from the application of narrative mediation in small interpersonal conflicts like family or employment settings to larger conflicts. The shift required a substantial focus to theoretical and epistemological details, and thus the development of the models became the primary aim of this research.

The models presented in this thesis are innovative in the sense that, as a *bricoleur*, I have woven together multiple practices and theoretical orientations including narrative forms of inquiry, Freirian emancipatory dialogue and participatory action research, and narrative mediation principles at the collective level. Similarly, I wove together an analytic approach using narrative analysis and a Foucauldian analytical approach to relations of power/knowledge at the local level.

8.3 Results

An analysis of the results of these two conversations demonstrates that through these methods the participants were able to

- Externalize the community problematics;
- Develop a collective statement of both a dominant and alternate narratives;
- Destabilize the totalizing descriptions of conflict so as to undermine the rigid and negative motivations that the conflicted parties had ascribed to each other;
- Focus attention on the relational domain;
- Identify some of the background discursive themes that appeared to create the container of the conflict-saturated narratives;
- Express a preference between dominant and alternative narratives; and
- Begin to develop strategies to
    - Reshape relationships in ways that resist the dominant narrative;
    - Reposition themselves in relationship to various discourses; and
    - Recognize and name new options for action that increased their sense of agency.

These dialogic methodologies also allowed me to gain a glimpse of the utility of the practices and applications that could flow from the granular communication model for both inquiry and conversation analysis.

8.4 Findings

There are three categories in which my findings occurred: the development of methods, the results that these methods produced, and a few observations about social construction as the proper framing for this work.

8.4.1 Development of methods.

- Participatory action research is well served by bricolagic approaches that allow the researcher to respond organically to the context in developing a strategy for inquiry and action.
- The combination of the performance metaphor and the narrative restorative community conferencing model allowed participants to discuss the dynamics of a racially-charged community in non-defensive and non-threatening ways.

- Problems previously characterized as *the lived experience of racial difference* were re-considered to be understood as responses to a set of conditions in the community – not as arising in or being the fault of the people.
- Externalizing the problem and then mapping the responses to the problems highlighted the idea of identity as performative.
- Situating the interpretation of the play in personal stories, created a space of vulnerability that also creates increased possibility for trust.
- *Performance* as a metaphor for community problems, creates many openings for actions and creates a space for establishing multiracial, multi-ethnic, and geographically dispersed coalitions.
- The introduction of narrative and constructionist principles and externalized, performance–based problem identification combined with a thorough power analysis, enhanced the community as theatre metaphor and addressed some of the previously noted limitations of the metaphor. This approach invited self-reflection from participants such that spaces of increased agency appeared.
- Both the narratively modified focused conversation and the narrative restorative community conferencing methods are viable and potentially powerful tools for future community engagement practices.
- Using these methods in conjunction with each other creates the space for an effective analysis of power relations in the community. In addition to considering interpersonal relational patterns, the methods produced analysis of systemic and institutional patterns, practices, and structures that are produced by and reproduce the underlying discourses.
- The model of granular communications has explanatory value for communication patterns and offers an excellent roadmap for inquiry in conflict, counseling, and visioning processes.
- The narratively modified focused conversation model, infused with granular communications modelling, created a roadmap for deconstructive listening.
- There is an important distinction between performance and performativity. Granular communications offers guidance for an inquiry process that allows a group to investigate both constructs.

8.4.2 Community analysis (via consideration of the text).

- Narrative inquiry is appropriate in a variety of forms and models for community research and not only research into individual and interpersonal meaning making.
- The collective narrative restorative conferencing process allows a community to name the broad range of dynamics that are in operation. The method diminishes the effects of hierarchy and voice privilege that might exist in the larger community context.
- Externalizing problems enabled participants to make connections between themselves and others, particularly others that they might see as the *Other*. Naming the problem externally and then mapping it allowed several people to notice how the same problematic had different manifestations in their lives than in the lives of others but they were able to connect and develop a greater shared sense of community experience.
- This problem-naming process increases the size and breadth of the audience that hears each individual's stories of struggle and triumph. Expanding the audience increased the sense of affirmation and also the possibility that each person's story would be known and retold in other arenas.
- A major aspect of increased sense of agency is to be able to make the claim that in a particular context, you are a person or a member of a group who has a claim of voice—you have a right to speak and to be heard. The *group* process creates an audience and the circle-based processes reinforce for some and establish for others their claim of voice. Many of these conversations could be conducted throughout the community on an individual basis and they could also be conducted in segments of the community where people who live and interact regularly are the exclusive participants of the audience. However, the benefit of the *community* process is that the wide-ranging demographic profile of the focus groups increased the sense of voice, particularly for those who do not experience a claim to voice in all settings throughout the community.
- The narrative restorative community conferencing process also resists the dominant narrative of invisibility and resists precarity of certain population segments. As people contribute to the naming of the problematic their words are recorded. As the problem is

mapped their experiences are registered. As they describe alternative and unique outcomes, their naming is honored and recorded. Although there is no requirement to share, if people do share, their words become part of the collective narrative, which means they can hear their own story as an integral part of the community's narrative. This, in turn, suggests that they have a place that is affirmed by others. When the entire narrative is shared with other audiences, it even further reinforces the sense of voice.

- The naming process of the narrative restorative community conferencing model was experienced by the participants as authentic, organic, democratic, and revelatory.
- The narratively modified focused conversation model integrates well into a larger workshop process with other tools developed for Playback Theater. The model already contains Freirian problem-posing material, and the metaphor of community as theatre gives participants an opportunity to play with their own performances, imagine alternative relations of power, and play them out.
- *Trouble in Mind* is excellent problem-posing material. The writer of the play insisted that the third act not be produced. This created an excellent dialogic opportunity for community members to discuss and move towards resolution of the problematic in a number of different methods.
- The Foucauldian framing of power related closely to the way community members named the problematic. This indicates two findings:
    - Firstly, the dialogue models developed in this context were excellent tools for conducting community analysis, particularly those with a desire to understand the power/knowledge dynamics that shape the community.
    - Secondly, Foucault's power/knowledge conceptualization provides an excellent explanatory framing for future investigation and analysis of power/dynamics in a community.

- If the hallmarks of narrative mediation can be achieved in a dialogue model, the community will be well positioned to develop strategies for radical and transformative action.
- Slowing down a conversational and communicative process is critical to the process of reshaping the community dynamic. The performative becomes reflex, which leaves the meaning-making process subject to routine process and normalized results. By slowing down and interrogating the process of meaning making, participants are able to actively notice where and how the uptake and utilization of particular discourse are shaping the trajectory of their lives.
- What is equally important is paying attention to the cultural, historical, and personal narratives and the discursive and recursive forces that exist. The Foucauldian model of power/knowledge analysis conducted through the narrative restorative community conferencing model with the infusion of process informed by granular communication allows a facilitator to conduct a conversation in a manner that yields the products of an archaeological inquiry without training the participants in the archaeological methods.

8.5 Thoughts about Social Construction as Framing for this Work

A major value-added of adopting a constructionist stance for community engagement processes involving race, ethnicity, religion or other identity-centered conflicts is that the lived experience of any of these socially constructed fictions can be discussed in relational and performative terms outside the categorical and discursively predetermined limits. There is a linguistic maxim that says you cannot define a word by using the word itself. There might also be a constructionist maxim, which would say you can neither understand nor deconstruct a category from within the limits of the categorical boundaries. Albert Einstein is attributed with the saying, "The same level of thinking that produced modern problems cannot be the level of thinking that will be needed to resolve them." Audre Lord says, "*You cannot dismantle the Master's House with the Master's tools*." All of these sayings express a similar idea.

The community-building corollary to this would be: understanding, deconstructing, reordering the effects of the modes of power, and then rebuilding community institutions and realigning or creating a set of alternative relational

patterns in a community, based on the preferred stories, must happen from outside the constraints of the dominant narratives and discourses. The difficulty is that people *do* live in the presence of their dominating narratives and have developed a relationship with the features of their narratives that give them a sense of a taken-for-granted reality.

Naming racial categories is a performative speech act. Locating someone in any particular category is also an interpellation, especially when they accept the label. The doctrine of interpellation states that a person is called into existence and made subject to the terms of that calling (Althusser, 1971; Butler, 1997a). In a community dominated by a heavily compressed narrative, that interpellation involves a denial of agency. Whether you benefit from or are disadvantaged by the power relations invoked in that narrative, you still operate within a limited range of performance available to you according to your calling.

One central aspect of the narrative approach to community-building is its approach to problem-framing, which is quite different than most psychological, structural, legal, and business-oriented approaches to conflict, conflict transformation or community-building. Most conflict resolution orientations operate from a problem-solving approach, where the problem is located in frustrated needs or unmet interests of equally-positioned parties who have the full capacity to express those needs and interests. There have been countless critiques of this primary orientation (Baruch Bush & Folger, 1994; Rothman, 1997). The narrative difference is expressed in the aphorism that is emblematic of the narrative approaches to therapy and mediation: "The people are not the problem; the problem is the problem" (Winslade & Monk, 2001). Many conversations about race and racism are explicitly stated as being about *race* or *racism* and the focus has been resolving *racial* issues. By naming the problem in this way it seems that the discussion locates the problem in the people (race) or in another person's response to an essential aspect of the person (personally mediated racism), or even the structures that disproportionately shape relations between groups based on race (structural racism). A primary principle of narrative mediation and therapy is that *"People are not the problem, the problem is the problem,"* thereby externalizing the problem; locating the problem in a story or discourse that exists outside the people. When conversations fail to externalize the problem, the discursive positions that the

participants are invited to seems to create substantial defensiveness and to categorize people in very stark, often binary terms (oppressor/oppressed; powerless/powerful), which in turn reinforces a compressed narrative that lacks nuance, richness, and texture and which also hides the unique outcomes and the budding presence of any alternative narratives.

What is possible in a performative and narrative approach to engagement is to name the lived experiences of race or ethnicity or gender or any other socially constructed category in relational terms of problematics that produce imbalanced possibilities for performance among various members of the community. The problematic is named as not directly or essentially identified with or located as the sole possession or responsibility or singular experience of any particular person or group of people; and mapping the effects of such problematics results in community narratives being understood in terms of performance and not personal animus.

Butler's notion of performativity and Austin's conceptualization of the performative speech act are also informative here. It may be that persons declaring themselves as belonging to a particular category are *coming out* in the sense that a performative speech act has correlative performatives associated with the act. In a community infused with a compressed narrative, the performativity associated with certain categories establishes a perception and usually institutional reinforcement of a limited range of performative options. In the same way that, if you declare yourself to be gay, there are many places that you cannot be married (limited performative options), if you declare yourself *Black* or *Latina* maybe you cannot be CEO or President or be given the leading role in a major theatre production. A deconstructive listening process like the narrative restorative community conferencing or the narratively modified focused conversation model supports narrative decompression in order to identify the relations in which these discursive and cultural narratives have their most profound effects.

8.6 Study Limitations

While the development of the methods was theoretically sound and productive from the perspective of community-engaged participatory action, there were some aspects I could have done better or differently. These shortcomings reduced the power and the capacity to fully test the value of the methods. Five limitations seem

particularly significant and also inform opportunities for future application in practice.

8.6.1 Range of participants.

The selection process for including participants was not inclusive of several groups. Even though the resulting participant groups were diverse in terms of age, race, ethnicity, income, education, and employment, there are ways in which they were not diverse. All of the participants were people I had either personally encountered, even if only on a limited basis, or they had talked to my co-investigator on the Greensboro TRC project, or they came highly recommended. I was expressly interested at the early stages in not including people who would be considered difficult, volatile, or polarizing. There were also certain categories of people that were excluded for other purposes to fit the research protocol. For instance, because I wanted to be able to record and transcribe the sessions, people who might have a sensitivity to that part of the process, like elected officials and foundation executives, were excluded. A full test of the process should include an even wider and more diverse spectrum of the community than I assembled. Narrowing the range of participants almost axiomatically narrowed the range of perspectives expressed. It would be interesting to notice in instances when it is possible to include a wider array of voices, whether and how a greater commitment to storytelling (limitation # 2) would shift the perspectives of individuals with vastly different lived experience.

8.6.2 More space for storying and deconstructive listening.

There were several junctures in the process where expanding the model through storytelling would help deepen the sharing and possibly plant seeds for new openings for action or new lines of flight. After naming the problematic, during the mapping process and again during the reverse mapping process, I had originally conceived the process as allowing time for story sharing in dyads or triads. For instance, in order to fully map the operations of power in communities, dialogue participants might be asked in smaller groupings of two to five per group to describe in greater detail experiences that they have languaged as weariness or invisibility, for instance, or describe the stories and performances associated with assimilation or one of the other constructs being used. The time required to add these components into a process is not inconsequential. If a full process were going to be implemented, it would be important to spell out a time commitment and describe a process at the

outset so that people would be able to commit. After the first session, I always felt under a time crunch. I had only asked the participants to commit to watching the play and participating in one evening of dialogue after the play. The additional time, even though it was requested by the participants, felt like an imposition on their time.

8.6.3 Logistics and process.

Because the time after the first conversation was grafted on, there were also logistical challenges that caused the first and second sessions to be too far apart to maintain a sense of momentum. In the future, if I knew that I was going to implement both dialogue models, I would fix the time of all the meetings and project a complete schedule so participants had a sense of certainty and clarity about meetings. This would also allow me to break the process up into meaningful segments, which in turn could include more time and opportunity for trust building, story sharing, and granular deconstruction.

8.6.4 Granular communications not fully tested.

I have described granular communications as an emerging model. It was occurring in flashes throughout the implementation of the two processes. I was more aware of my understanding and reliance on the theory in the second session than I was in the first. I only began to articulate it to myself during the first session and I had made a first take on its articulation between the first and second sessions. At the outset of the first session there were no plans for a second session. In the period in-between sessions, as I designed the second session, I was more aware of the emergence of this theory. I used my awareness of it to guide my questions.

As the theory was emerging, I had several informal opportunities to use the theory to guide me through an interpersonal inquiry process. As the process became clearer, I began to infuse it in the questions for the second session. The model has both explanatory value and offers guidance for the direction of an inquiry, particularly a deconstructive listening process. The process suggested by granular communications, in addition to the narrative modifications for the focused conversations, was never fully realized.

8.6.5 Incorporating actual theatre games.

In a full and extensive workshop, I would incorporate theater games. There were many opportunities to engage and practice performing equity and equality. In

my original conceptualization of a full-blown narrative mediation workshop model, I had envisioned utilizing some playback theater games and other activities as well. Because it was part of the original conceptualization but never implemented, I consider this a limitation to the success of this work.

8.7 Going Forward

At some point in the research process, the investigator must stop to ask for feedback and reflection from the readers and the communities of concern. This section is intended to serve that function. As a way of seeking feedback, I will list a few implications for research and practice. My thinking is that the reader will both see value or flaws in my approach and possibly, by taking up one of the suggested research or practice suggestions, find an opportunity to test them.

8.7.1 Implications for research.

With regard to future research, I think there are several opportunities:

Testing each method independently

There would be some value in implementing and perfecting the facilitation practices associated with each of these two methods. A testing and refinement and of each of the two methods would allow each process to be put forth in more practice - oriented materials for general use in the fields of community conflict resolution, community building, and development. There are two methods and one model that could each be considered and applied independently of one another: narratively modified focused conversations, narrative restorative community conferencing, and granular communications.

Testing methods as part of a larger coordinated program of PAR

In addition to testing each method as a stand-alone tool and technique, there is also an opportunity to plan to intentionally incorporate both tools into a larger participatory action design process. If it were clear (to the researcher) from the outset that both techniques would be used, several of the process limitations could also be overcome. Specifically, getting a time commitment from participants in the beginning would allow larger or more frequent blocks of time to be allocated. This would increase opportunities for storytelling, give participants clarity about the overall process, maintain momentum, and possibly also open up time and resources to incorporate some theatre or interplay work.

8.7.2 Implications for practice.

The implications for research and practice are significant. In deconstructing a conflict-saturated narrative, granular communications offers a roadmap for inquiry that allows the inquirer to follow along and gives the communicator a real opportunity to unveil the workings of cultural assumptions, discourse, and even previously uninvestigated performative patterns. In large group processes the same is possible and yet it also offers a roadmap that allows community members to investigate with one another and to interrogate their own thinking. Because these methods were designed to support participatory action research, the same opportunities that exist for research exist for practice. In addition though, I have a sense that the granular communications model would provide an excellent road map for narratively-oriented counselors, mediators, and even trial lawyers.

Granular communications in combination with a performance and embodiment experience (some theatrical form like Playback or other Theatre of the Oppressed games) would allow the communicator and the entire community to try out new and different ways of positioning and acting – even resisting. This opens and tests new options for action in ways that both deconstruct and also destabilize performative and reflexive responses.

Also for narrative *counselors and mediators*, the guidance for inquiry implied in the granular communications model would be worth testing. A granular communications derived inquiry would suggest deconstructing a conflict-saturated narrative by slowing down the process long enough to have the narrator appreciate the automatic and reflexive aspects of their meaning-making process and noticing where discourse and cultural narratives are having their effects on behaviors including the perceived range of performance and emotive possibility. This would include having the narrator: a) identify their intentions for a particular communicative action, b) consider the intended communication and other possible performative manifestations, c) have the narrator name the audiences that they were performing for, d) investigate other performance possibilities, e) allow the observer or recipient of the communication to state their observation (separate observation from judgment or meaning making,)f) identify the narrative streams used to interpret the observation, g) notice the distance of the exchange (relational, referential, representational), and then h) determine the impact of the

communication on the observer or receiver. The process could be even more nuanced by having an observer of the communication for whom the communication was not originally intended to follow the same process. This process, although at times tedious, will expose much of the background narrative and many of the controlling discourses that insinuate themselves into a relationship. I see *granular communications* as an additional tool for narrative therapists and mediators to help even more clearly unveil the discourses and controlling narratives that shape the conflict-saturated narrative.

For Trial Lawyers – Having served as both a defense lawyer and plaintiffs' counsel, I see granular communications as a theory to aide communication management during the evidence gathering and testimony giving phases of a trial. It is often the case that if one or the other party can be positioned in a category in which the discursive effects are disadvantageous, the practice of the counsel should be to work with the observers (judge and jury) to move the person (or corporation) from a representational distance to at the least a referential distance and whenever possible a relational exchange.

> "Ma'am I hear you say all doctors are mean and greedy, I want to check with you about your specific relationship with Dr. Hale."

Alternatively if there is a category that the observers have high regard for, you can seek to move your client towards that category and decrease the level of personal texture. These are practices and strategies to be spelled out in future research efforts.

CONCLUSION

It is hard to offer a last word when you imagine the research will continue. But here is my offering. *Bricolage* as a way of engaging communities seems to be the most appropriate way to enter into a community change effort. Listening to the community, developing approaches in context and refining approaches based on the resources and opportunities that present themselves seems to honor and respect the community. When you enter a community there is likely to be a dominant narrative. Often because of infiltrated consciousness and the repetitive performative way of being, a dominant narrative will be presented and even defended by those who are harmed or marginalized by those who are contributing to and benefiting from its perpetuation, and by those people of goodwill who have organized to change it. *The people aren't the problem. The problem is the problem.* In order to plant the seeds

for radical transformation, be with the people but do not study them; experience the systems but do not study them. Study the relations of power that form and inform and to which the people and institutions conform.

I started this thesis by paraphrasing Michel Foucault, who said,

> If I had to write a book to communicate what I'm already thinking before I begin to write, I would never have the courage to begin. I write a book only because I still don't exactly know what to think about this thing I want so much to think about, so that the book transforms me and transforms what I think. … I'm an experimenter in the sense that I write in order to change myself and in order not to think the same thing as before. (Foucault, 1994, pp. 239-240)

I will continue writing because my thinking is not settled. It is, however, far enough down the road that I can stop and ask for feedback. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it … for now.

Epilogue: Performative Soundings of Community

Often in community engagement work, what people tend to listen for and work to develop are the harmonious sounds of *operationalized citizenship* (Taliaferro, Casstevens, & Gunby, 2013); a community that is inclusive and equitable and where its people feel that they are valued and have not only equal rights, responsibilities, obligations to society, and privileges of membership, but also equal capacity to activate those rights, fulfill their responsibilities, meet their obligations and to be advantaged by their privileges. I realize at the end of this project that the primary outcome of this work is not to move towards harmony. Rather, the methods I have developed are better conceptualized as understanding the community harmonics.

In the same way that performance and performativity reflect two distinct conceptualizations of behavior, so too do the concepts of harmony and harmonics represent two different understandings of musical soundings. Whereas harmony reflects the idea of a pleasing combination or congruence of elements in relationship to the whole (Merriam-Webster), *harmonics* seek to understand the processes of sounding by deconstructing the sounding into its component parts. The methods that have been introduced in combination with the granular theory are designed to understand each soundings that is contributing to the overall sound quality of the community.

In music, each note is a presence that consists of a dominant frequency and a series of overtones. The note by itself will be heard in certain ways. In fact, the pure singular note without overtones can only be produced artificially. It is due to the context in which it exists that the note produces overtones. The overtones reflect the context in the sense that the note, which is vibration occurring at a certain frequency, will cause other entities in the surrounding area to vibrate as well. Certain vibrational frequencies cause other entities with an affinity to those frequencies to also vibrate. These are overtones. Each note, with its overtones, interacts differently with other notes and their overtones.

So there is a primary frequency and a collection of harmonics. If we conceptualize sound as occurring in a wave pattern, then harmonics are the waves that occur under the primary wave and travel along with it towards the site where

sound will be received. When two or more notes interact, the harmonics can either create a sound that is described as *harmony* or as *dissonance.*

Individuals in community are like notes. Their performance and their performativity produce an impression (performance) and an overall effect (performativity). The communicative sounds an individual makes may somewhere have a pure note presence, but that purity can only be conceived artificially because all of their soundings are in context. The notes that we each are have undertones. Our communications are comprised, following Foucault, of nodes of meanings. Each word, each expression, each gesture, every aspect of our morphology and our aesthetics are communicative, not because they have a pure and essential meaning but because they reverberate previous soundings. The communications that we make and the discourse that we are spoken by have soundings and those soundings have a history of soundings. Following Gergen (2009), I would also raise the possibility that no sound – no human communication – occurs *sua sponte/ or ab initio*. Even the first utterance or gesture in a communication sequence is in response to previous conversations, gestures, utterances and the like. What we experience in each other as *communication* is actually better understood as a note that is sounding in response to previous notes.

Individuals can be metaphorically associated with notes and our communications understood as notes, overtones, harmonics and reverberations from previous eras. If so, then communities can be said to take on the qualities of complex chords. A complex chord consists of several notes arranged and played in a certain sequence. The complex chord will create a sound that occurs to the hearer as a unified singular sound (sometimes with a secondary sound but a primary dominant sound). If those same notes are arranged differently and yet played together, a different complex chord producing a sound distinctly different from the first will emerge from the same collection of notes. The sound that is produced may well be described as major(ity) or minor(ity) chord. Different cultures make meaning of major and minor chords to assign them emotional context that doesn't exist independently in the notes themselves.

Following this reasoning, we could say that embedded in any complex chord is the material needed to produce a distinctly different chord. If a community narrative is considered metaphorically to be like a complex chord and each individual to be like

a note with a dominant frequency and a series of overtones the overtones reflect the reverberation of various discourses that a person operates in relation to. The harmonics soundings of each note are reflected in the discursive position that each person assumes in response to each other note, and the same note will sound differently in different contexts. In some instances, the various discursive positions will align in ways that produce a harmonic outcome, in other instances dissonance.

A community with a dominant or compressed narrative may use all of the mechanisms at its disposal to create a sounding that occurs as one unified note. The notes in that community that do not feel fully expressed will seek to make a claim to voice. The notes want to have the privilege of sounding and being listened to.

The methods of dialogue presented in this study infused with the granular communication principles deconstruct the complex chord of community to understand each note and to notice the resulting harmonics of any one note in the context of other notes. While harmony may not be achieved, having a better, more fine-tuned understanding of the harmonic material in a community gives the community builder and others the capacity to accomplish dis-chording in pursuit of a chord (or accord) that is more pleasing to all.

A luta continua…
dah

Appendix – A

Touchstones for Creating Hospitable Space HANDOUT

(Adapted from the Center for Courage and Renewal)

Be 100% present, extending and presuming welcome. Set aside the usual distractions of things undone from yesterday, things to do tomorrow. Welcome others into this place and presume you are welcome as well.

Listen deeply. Listen intently to what is said, listen to feelings beneath the words. As Quaker Douglas Steere writes "To listen another's soul into life, into a condition of disclosure and discovery – may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another."

It is never "share or die." You will be *invited* to share in pairs, small groups, and in large circle. The invitation is exactly that. You will determine the extent to which you want to participate.

No fixing. We are not here to set someone else straight or to help right another's wrong. We are here to witness the mystery of community as reflected in the stories we share.

Suspend judgment. Set aside your judgments. By creating a space between judgments and reactions, we can listen to another person, and to ourselves, more fully.

Identify assumptions. By identifying our assumptions, which are usually transparent, we can set them aside and open the sharing and learning to greater possibilities.

Speak your truth. You are invited to say what is in your heart, trusting that your voice will be heard and your contribution respected. A helpful practice is to use "I" statements.

Practice confidentiality care. We create a safe space by respecting the nature and content of stories shared. If anyone asks that a story shared be kept in confidence, the group will honor that request.

Turn to wonder. If you find yourself disagreeing with another, becoming judgmental, or shutting down in defense, try turning to wonder: "I wonder what brought her to this place?" "I wonder what my reaction teaches me?" "I wonder what he's feeling right now?"

REFERENCES

Akbar, N. (1996). *Breaking the chains of psychological slavery*. Tallahassee, FL: Mind Productions.

Akbar, N. (1998). *Akbar papers in Afrikan psychology*. Tallahasee, FL: Mind Productions.

Alexander, J. C. (2012). *Trauma: A social theory*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Alexander, M. (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass incaceration in the age of colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Allen, T. (2012). *The invention of the White race, racial oppression and social control* (Vol. I). New York, NY: Verso Books.

Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and ideological state apparatuses. In L. Althusser, *Lenin and philosophy and other essays* (B. Brewster, Trans., pp. 127-188). London, UK: New Left Books.

Amstutz, L. S. (2009). *The little book of victim-offender conferencing*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Aragon, J. (2011). *The socio-economic effects of homelessness in Pinellas County*. Sarasota, FL: University of South Florida.

Arendt, H. (1970). *On violence*. San Diego, CA: Harvest Books.

Atkinson, J. (2002). *Trauma trails: recreating song lines: The transsgenerational effects of trauma in indigenous Australia*. Melbourne, Vic., Australia: Spinifex Press.

Atkinson, P., & Delamont, S. (2008). Analytic perspectives. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (3rd edn., pp. 285-311). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words* (2nd edn.). (J. O. Urmson, & M. Sbisa', Eds.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Avruch, K. (2010). Truth and reconciliation commissions: Problems in transitional justice and the reconstruction of identity. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 47*(1), 33-49.

Babb, V. (1998). *Whiteness visible: The meaning of Whiteness in American literature and culture*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Babcock, M. (1989). The Dramaturgic Perspective: Implications for the study of person perception. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 19*, 297-309.

Baruch Bush, R. A., & Folger, J. P. (1994). *The promise of mediation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Baum, F., MacDougall, C., & Smith, D. (2006). Glossary: Participatory action research. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, 60*, 854-857.

Bava, S. (2005). Performance methodology: Constructing discourses and discursive research practices in family therapy. In D. H. Sprenkle, & F. P. Piercy (Eds.), *Research Methods in Family Therapy* (2nd edn., pp. 170-190). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Bazemore, G. (2000). Community justice and a vision of collective efficacy: The case for restorative conferences. In *Criminal Justice 2000* (Vol. 3, pp. 225-297). Washington, DC: US Department of Justice.

Belgrave, F., & Allison, K. W. (2009). *African American psychology: From Africa to America*.Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bell, L. A. (2003). Telling tales: What stories can each us about race and racism. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 6*(1), 3-28.

Bell, L. A. (2010). *Storytelling for social justice: Connecting narrative and arts in anti-racist teaching*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Besley, A. C. (2002). Foucault and the turn to narrative therapy. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 30*(2), 125-144.

Belsey, C. (2002). *Poststructuralism: A very short introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Berlin, I. (2010). *The making of African America: The four great migrations*. New York, NY: Viking/ Penguin.

Blackmon, D. A. (2008). *Slavery by another name: The re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

Boal, A. (1985). *Theatre of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Theatre Communications Group.

Boal, A. (2000). *Theatre of the oppressed*. London, UK: Pluto Press.

Boff, L., & Boff, C. (1986). *Liberation theology: from dialogue to confrontation*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Boje, D. M., & Rosile, G. A. (2001). Where's the power in empowerment? : Answers from Follett and Clegg. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 37*, 90 - 117.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2010). *Racism without racists: Colorblind racism & racial inequality in contemporary America* (3rd ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (1995). *The craft of research*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Borda, O. F. (2013). Action research in the convergence of disciplines. *International Journal of Action Research; 9* (2), 155-167.

Bozzoli, B. (2004). *Theatres of struggle and the end of apartheid*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Brooker, P. (Ed.). (2002). *A concise glossary of cultural theory* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Bruffee, K. A. (1986). Social construction, language and the authority of knowledge: A bibliographical Essay. (N. C. Teachers, Ed.) *College English, 48*(8), 773-790.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (2002). *Making stories: Law, literature, life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bunker, B. B. (2000). Managing conflict through large-group methods. In M. Deutsch, & P. T. Coleman (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution*(pp. 223-247). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1988). "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology. *PoMo Seminars*.

Butler, J. (1988, December). Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist. *Theatre Journal, 40*(4), 519-531.

Butler, J. (1997a). *The Psychic life of power: Theories in subjection*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Butler, J. (1997b). *Excitable speech: A politics of the performative*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2009, Septiembre-Diciembre). Performativity, precarity and sexual politics. *AIBR. Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana. , 4*(3), i-xiii.

Butler, J. (2011, Feb 19). *Your gender creates your performance*. Retrieved July 2013, from Big Think: http://bigthink.com/videos/your-behavior-creates-your-gender

Cabrera, M. (1995). *Living and surviving in a multiply-wounded society*. Retrieved Jan 18, 2012, from Medico International: www.medico-international.de/en/projects/ social/ps_cabrera_en.pdf

Cahill, S., & Halpern, J. (1990). *Ceremonial circle: Practice, ritual, and renewal for community healing*. SanFrancisco, CA: Harper.

Cane, P. M. (2003). *Trauma healing and transformation* (2nd edn.). Santa Cruz, CA: Capacitar International.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through quanititative analysis*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2008). Constructionism and grounded theory. In J. Holstein, & J. Gubrium (Eds.), *Handbook of constructionist research* (pp. 397-412). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Chase, S. E. (2008). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 57-94). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. SanFrancisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cobb, S. (1994). A narrative perspective on mediation. In J. P. Folger, & T. S. Jones, *New directions in mediation: Communications research and perspectives* (pp. 48-66). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cobb, S. (2013). *Speaking of violence: The politics and poetics of narrative in conflict resolution (Explorations in narrative psychology)*. New York, NY: Oxford.

Cohen, C. E., Varea, R. G., & Walker, P. O. (Eds.). (2011). *Acting together: Performance and the creative transformation of conflict: Resistance and reconciliation in regions of violence* (Vol. I). Oakland, CA: New Village Press.

Collins, J., & Mayblin, B. (1996). *Introducing Derrida: A graphic guide*. London, UK: Icon Books.

Collins, J., & Mayblin, B. (2011). *Introducing Derrida*. London, UK: Icon Books.

Cone, J. H. (1970). *A Black theology of liberation*. New York, NY: Orbis.

Cooperrider, D. L., Sorensen, P. F., Whitney, D., & Yaeger, T. F. (Eds.). (2000). *Appreciative inquiry: Rethinking human organization toward a positive theory of change*. Champagne, IL: Stipes Publishing.

Daly, K. (2000). Restorative justice in diverse and unequal societies. In A. Goldsmith, & M. Israel (Eds.), *Criminal justice in diverse communities* (pp. 167- 191). NSW, Annandale, Australia: Federation Press.

Davies, B. (1990). Agency as a Form of Discursive Practice. A Classroom Scene Observed. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 11*(3), 341-361.

Davies, B., & Harre, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior, 20*, 43-63.

Dawson, K. E. (2011, April). Leadership from the file room to the board room: A grounded theory inquiry into the influences of a leadership development program on participants. *A Dissertation in support of Ph.D*. Tilburg, NE: Taos Institute/Tilburg University.

Denborough, D. (2010). Resonance, rich description and social-historical healing: the use of collective narrative practice in Srebrenica. *Kite of life*. Adelaide, South Australia: Dulwich Centre Foundation.

Denborough, D. (2010). Narrative practice as conflict dissolution/social-historical healing. In D. Denborough, *Socio/Historical Conflict Dissolution*. Adelaide, South Australia: Dulwich Centre.

Denborough, D. (2011). *Kite of Life: From Intergenerational Conflict to Intergenerational Alliance*. Adelaide, South Australia: Dulwich Centre Foundation.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2008). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Dills, C. R., & Romiszowski, A. J. (1997). The instructional development paradigm: An introduction. In C. R. Dills, & A. J. Romiszowski (Eds.), *Instructional development paradigms* (pp. i-xii). Englewood, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.

Drewery, W., & Winslade, J. (1997). The theoretical story of narrative therapy. In G. Monk, J. Winslade, K. Crocket, & D. Epston (Eds.), *Narrative therapy in practice: The archeology of hope* (pp. 32-52). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dugan, M. (1996). A nested theory of conflict. *Women in Leadership, 1* (1), 9-20.

Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (1972). *Discursive psychology*. London, UK: Sage.

Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (1992). *Discursive psychology*. London, UK: Sage.

Esonwanne, U. (1992, Winter). Race and hermeneutics: Paradigm shift From scientific to hermeneutic understanding. *African American Review, 26*(4), 565-582.

Eyerman, R. (2001). *Cultural trauma: Slavery and the formation of African American identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ferrante, J., & Brown. Jr., P. (1998). *The social construction of race and ethnicity in the United States*. New York, NY: Longman- Addison Wessley.

Fetterman, D. M. (2009). Ethnography. In L. Bickman, & D. J. Rog (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of applied social research* (2nd ed., pp. 543-588). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ford, C. L., & Airhihenbuwa, C. O. (2010). Critical race theory, race equity, and public health: Towards and antiracism praxis. *American Journal of Public Health, 100*(S1), S30-S35.

Foucault, M. (1970). *The order of things: An archeaology of human sciences*. New York, NY: Vintage/Random House.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. (A. S. Smith, Trans.) New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1973). *The birth of a clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1976). *The history of sexuality: An introduction*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Language, counter-memory, practice: Selected essays and interviews by Michel Foucault*. (D. F. Bouchard, Ed., D. F. Bouchard, & S. Simon, Trans.) Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1982, Summer). The subject and power. *Critical Inquiry*, 777-795.

Foucault, M. (1984). Nietzsche, genealogy, history. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 76-100). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1994a). *Power*. (J. D. Faubion, Ed., & R. Hurley, Trans.) New York, NY: The New Press.

Foucault, M. (1994b). The subject and power. In M. Foucault, & J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power* (pp. 326-348). New York, NY: The New Press.

Foucault, M. (1994c). Truth and juridical Forms. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Power* (pp. 1-89). New York, NY: The New Press.

Foucault, M. (1997). *Society must be defended*. (M. Bertani, A. Fontana, Eds., & D. Macey, Trans.) New York, NY: Picador.

Freedman, J., & Combs, G. (1996). *Narrative therapy: The social construction of preferred realities*. New York,NY: Norton.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum Books.

Freire, P. (1995). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Gardeners Books.

Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy and civic courage*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

Friedmann, M. (2006, Fall). Nancy J. Hirschmann on social construction of women's freedom. *Hypatia, 21*(4), 182-191.

Ganz, M. (2008). *What is public narrative*. Retrieved Jan 17, 2012, from The Grass Roots Fund: http://grassrootsfund.org/docs/WhatIsPublicNarrative08.pdf

Garrett, P. B., & Baquedano-Lopez, P. (2002, June 12). Language socialization: reproduction and contiunuity, transformation and change. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 31*, 339-361.

Geertz, C. (1992). "Local knowledge" and its limits: Some *orbiter dicta*. *Yale Journal of Crticism, 5*(2), 129-136.

Gergen, K. (1985, March). The Social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist, 40*(3), 266-275.

Gergen, K. (2009). *Relational being: Beyond self and community*. Oxford,UK: Oxford University Press.

Gergen, K. J. (2001). *Social construction in context*. London, UK: Sage.

Gergen, K. J. (2009). *An invitation to social construction* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gergen, M., & Gergen, K. J. (2003). *Social construction: A reader*. London, UK: Sage.

Gergen, M., & Gergen, K. J. (2012). *Playing with purpose: Adventures in perfomative social science*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Gilligan, J. (2001). *Preventing violence*. London, UK: Thames & Hudson.

Ginsburg, E. (2013, January 30). *Under surveillance: How Greensboro police monitor activists*. Retrieved November 4, 2013, from *Yes! Weekly* electronic version: http://www.yesweekly.com/triad/article-15466-un-der-su-rvei-llance.html

Giroux, H. A. (2002, Winter). Neoliberalism, corporate culture, and the promise of higher education: The university as a democratic public sphere. *Harvard Educational Review, 72*(4), 425- 464.

Goffman, E. (1997). *The Goffman reader*. (C. Lemert, & A. Branaman, Eds.) Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2006). *Executive Summary*. Greensboro: Greensboro TRC.

Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2006). *Final Report of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Greensboro: Greensboro TRC.

Guthrie, R. (1976). *Even the rat was white: A historical view of psychology (2nd ed)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Gutierrez, G. (2001). *A theology of liberation: History, politics, and salvation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Gutting, G. (2005). *Foucault: A very short introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Hamston, J. (2006, April). Bakhtin's theory of dialogue: A construct for pedagogy, methodology, and analysis. *The Austrailian Educational Researcher, 33*(1).

Harker, T. (1997). Therapy with male sexual abuse survivors. In G. Monk, J. Winslade, K. Crochet, & D. Epson (Eds.), *Narrative therapy in practice: The archeology of hope* (pp. 193-214). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Haslebo, G. (2008). Positioning: applying the narrative approach to consultancy work in organizations. *Erhvervspsykologi, 1*(1), 54-67.

Heikkinen, H. L., Huttunen, R., & Syrjala, L. (2007). Action research as narrative: five principles for validation. *Educational Action Research, 15*(1), 5-19.

Heikkinen, H. L., Huttunen, R., Syrjala, L., & Pesonen, J. (2012). Action research and narrative inquiry: Five principles for validation revisited. *Education Action Research, 20*(1), 5-21.

Hepburn, A. & Wiggins, S. (Eds.) (2007). *Discursive Research in Practice: New Approaches to Psychology and Interaction*. New York, New York: Cambridge University.

Hirschmann, N. J. (2006). Response to Friedman and Brison. *Hypatia, 21*(4), 201-211.

Hodgson, D. (2005). Putting on professional performance: Performativity, subversion and project management. *Organization, 12*(51).

Hoffman, L. (1997). Foreward. In H. Anderson, *Conversation, language, and possibilities: A postmodern approach to therapy* (pp. XI- XVI). New York, NY: Basic Books.

Hood, R. E. (1990). *Must God remain Greek: Afro cultures and God talk*. Denver, CO: Fortress Press.

Hooker, D. A. (2011, November 3). Restorative justice: Savior or officious intermeddler? *Mario G. Olmos Law and Cultural Diversity Memorial Lecture*. Berkeley, CA: Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice.

Hooker, D. A. & Czjaikowski, A. P. (2012). *Transforming historical harms*. Harrisonburg, VA: Eastern Menoninte University online.

Hope, A. & Timmel, S. (1995). *Training for transformation* (Vol. 1). Warwickshire, UK: Practical Action Publishing.

Jabri, V. (1996). *Discourses on violence: Conflict analysis reconsidered*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Kamberilis, G., & Dimitriadis, G. (2008). Focus groups: Strategic articulations of pedagogy, politics and inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 375 -402). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2005). On to the next level: Continuing the conceptualization of the bricolage. *Qualitative Inquiry, 11*(3), 323 - 350.

Kostera, M. (2006, Spring). Narrative collage as a method of research. *Storytelling, Self, Society, 2*(2), 5-27.

Kraybill, R., & Wright, E. (2006). *The little book of cool tools for hot topics*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Kuhn, T. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions.Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press*

Kuhn, T. S. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (3rd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kunjufu, J. (1985). *Countering the conspiracy to destroy Black boys* (Vol. I & II). Chicago, IL: African American Images.

Kupferberg, I., & Green, D. (2005). *Trouble talk: Metaphorical negotiation in problem discourse*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyer.

Laird, J. (1989). Women and stories: Restorying women's self constructions. In M. McGoldrick, C. Anderson, & F. Walsh, *Women in families: A framework for family therapy* (pp. 427-450). New York, NY: Norton.

Lakoff, G. a. (1980). The metaphorical structure of the human conceptual system. *Cognitive Science, 4*, 195-208.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Conceptual metaphor in everyday language. *Journal of Philosophy, 77*(8), 453-486.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). The Metaphorical Structure of the Human Conceptual System. *Cognitive Science, 4*, 195-208.

Lal, S., Suto, M., & Ungar, M. (2012). Examining the potential of combining the methods of grounded theory and narrative inquiry: A comparative analysis. *The Qualitative Report, 17*, 1-22.

Lamont, M., & Small, M. L. (2010, March). Cultural diversity and anti-poverty policy. *International Social Science Journal, 61*(199), 169-180.

Leary, D. J. (2005). *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's legacy of enduring injury and healing*. Milwaukie, OR: Uptone Press.

Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. Washington, D.C.: The United States Institute of Peace Press.

Lederach, J. P. (2003). *The little book of conflict transformation*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Lederach, J. P. (2005). *The moral imagination*. New York: NY: Oxford.

Lederach, J. P., & Lederach, A. J. (2010). *When blood and bones cry out*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Levett, A., Kottler, A., Burman, E., & Parker, I. (Eds.) (1997). *Culture, power & difference: Discourse analysis in South Africa*. Cape Town, South Africa: University of Cape Town Press.

Levine, P. A. (2005). *Healing trauma*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.

Levine, P. A., & with Frederick, A. (1997). *Waking the tiger: Healing trauma*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Levi-Strauss, C. (1967). *The elementary structure of kinship*. *Boston, MA: Beacon*

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. R. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), The Sage h*andbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed. pp. 163-188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

MacIntyre, A. (1981). *After virtue: A study in moral philosophy*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

MacIntyre, A. (2006). Epistemological crises, dramatic narrative, and the philosophy of science. In A. MacIntyre, *The tasks of philosophy: Vol 1: Selected essays* (pp. 3-23). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. (2004). *Enacting participatory development: Theatre-based techniques*. London, UK: Earthscan.

McCaslin, M. L., & Scott, K. W. (2003, September). The five-question method for framing a qualitative research study. *The Qualitative Report, 8*(3), 447-461.

McNamee, S. (2004). Social construction as practical theory: Lesons for practice and reflection in psychotherapy. In D. Pare, & G. Larner, *Critical knowledge and practice in psychothreapry*. New York, NY: Haworth Press.

Medina, J. (2011). Toward a Foucaultian epistemology of resistance: Counter-memory, epistemic friction, and guerrilla pluralism. *Foucault Studies, 12*, 9-35.

Mehl-Madrona, L. (2007). *Narrative medicine: The use of history and story in the healing process*. Rochester, VT: Bear & Co.

Mehl-Madrona, L. (2010). *Healing the mind through the power of story: The promise of narrative psychiatry*. Rochester, VT: Bear & Co.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). *harmony*. Retrieved December 11, 2013, from merriam-webster.com/dictionary: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/harmony

Meyers, L. J. (2010). *The Power of memoir: How to write your healing story*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, J. H. (2007). Performativity as performance/performativity as speech act: Derrida's special theory of performativity. *South Atlantic Quarterly, 106*(2), 219-235.

Milloca, R. F. (2006). *Healing invisible wounds*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Monk, G. (1997). How narrative therapy works. In G. Monk, J. Winslade, K. Crocket, & D. Epston (Eds.), *Narrative therapy in practice: The archeology of hope* (pp. 3-31). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Monk, G., & Winslade, J. (2013). *When stories clash: Addressing conflict with narrative mediation*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute.

Monk, G., Winslade, J., Crocket, K., & Epston, D. (Eds.). (1997). *Narrative therapy in practice: The archeology of hope*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Morrison, T. (Ed.). (1992). *Race-ing justice, en-gendering power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the construction of social reality*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Nash, C. (2000). Performativity in practice: Some recent work in cultural geography. *Progress in Human Geography, 24*(4), 653-664.

Nelson, H. L. (2001). *Damaged identities: Narrative repair*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Nowell-Smith, P. H. (1977). The constructionist theory of history. *History and Theory, 16*(4), 1-28.

Ochs, E., & Capps, L. (1996). Narrating the self. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 25*, 19-43.

Okun, T. (2010). *The Emperor has no clothes: Teaching about race and racism to people who don't want to know*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Ore, T. E. (2006). *The social construction of difference and inequality: Race, class, gender, and sexuality* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw/ Hill.

Palmer, P. (2004). *A hidden wholeness: The journey towards an undivided life*. SanFrancisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Paré, D. A. (1995). Of families and other cultures: The shifting paradigm of family therapy. *Family Process, 19*, 1-19.

Parisi, D., Taquino, M., Grice, S. M., & Gill, D. A. (2004). Civic responsibility and the environment: Linking local conditions to community environmental

activeness. *Society and Natural Resources: An international journal, 17*(2), 97-112.

Parker, R. (2001). *Healing wounded history: Reconciling peoples and restoring places*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press.

Parry, A., & Doan, R. E. (1994). *Story re-visions: Narrative therapy in a postmodern world*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Phillips, D. (1995). The good, the bad, and the ugly: The many faces of constructivisim. *Educational Researcher, 24*(5), 5-12.

Pinderhughes, E. (1989). *Understanding race, ethnicity and power: The key to efficacy in clinical practice*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Porter, T. (Ed.). (2006). *Conflict and communion: Reconciliation and restorative justice at Christ's table*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Center.

Porter, T. (2010). *The spirit and art of conflict transformation: Creating a culture of justpeace*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room.

Potter, J. (1996). *Representing reality: Discourse, rhetoric, and social construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

powell, j. a. (2012). *Racing to justice: Transforming our conceptions of self and other to build an inclusive society*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University press.

Rasmussen, B. B., Klinenberg, E., Nexica, I. J., & Wray, M. (Eds.). (2001). *The making and unmaking of Whiteness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Redfield, J. (1993). *The Celestne prophecy*. New York, NY: Warner Books.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rohd, M. (1998). *Theatre for community conflict and dialogue: The 'Hope is Vital' training manual*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Rothman, J. (1997). *Resolving identity-based conflict in nations, organizations, and communities*. SanFrancisco: Jossey-Bass.

Saussure, F. d. (1959, 2011). *Course in general linguistics*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Savin-Baden, M., & van Niekerk, L. (2007). Narrative inquiry: Theory and practice. *Journal of Geography in Higher education, 31*(3), 459-472.

Schaffner, C., & Wenden, A. L. (Eds.). (1999). *Language and peace*. Amsterdam, NE: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Schirch, L. (2004). *Ritual and symbol in peacebuilding*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.

Schirch, L. (2004). *The Little Book of Strategic peacebuilding*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Schneider, A. L., & Ingram, H. M. (Eds.). (2005). *Deserving and entitled: Social construction and public policy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Senge, P. (2006). *The Fifth Discipline: The art and practice of learning organizations*. New York: Currency Books/Random House.

Shotter, J., & Gergen, K. J. (Eds.). (1989). *Texts of identity*. London, UK: Sage.

Sluzki, C. E. (1990). Negative explanation, drawing distinctions, raising dilemmas, collapsing time, externalization of problems. *Residential Treatment for Children and Youth, 7*(3), 33-37.

Smedley, A., & Smedley, B. (2000). Race as biology is fiction, racism as a social problem is real. *International Journal of Health Services, 30*(1), 16 - 26

Smedley, A., & Smedley, B. D. (2005). Race as biology is fiction, racism as a social problem is real: Anthropological and historical perspectives on the social construction of race. *American Psychologist, 60*(1), 16-26.

Solorzano, D. G. (1997). Images and Words that Wound: Critical Race Theory, Racial Stereotyping and Teacher Education. *Teacher Education Quarterly 24(3), 5-19*.

Stahl, B. C. (2007). *Positivism or non-positivism - terium non datur: A critique of ontologucal syncretism in IS research*. Retrieved May 2, 2012, from http://www.cse.dmu.ac.uk/~bstahl/publications/2007_positivism_nonpositivism_springer.pdf

Stam, H. J. (2001). Introduction: Social constructionism and its critics. *Theory and Psychology, 11*, 291- 297.

Taliaferro, J. D., Casstevens, W. J., & Gunby, J. T. (2013). Working with African American clients using narrative therapy: An operational citizenship and critical race theory framework. *The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work, 2013*(1), 34-46.

Tan, S.-L., & Moghaddam, F. M. (1995). Reflexive positioning and culture. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 25*(4), 387-400.

Taylor, D. (1996). *The Healing power of stories*. New York, New York: Doubleday.

Thandeka. (2000). *Learning to be White: Money, race, and God in America*. New York, NY: Continuum.

The Canadian Institute for Cultural Affairs. (2000). *The art of focused conversation: 100 ways to access group wisdom in the workplace*. (B. Stanfield, Ed.) Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers.

Torbert & Associates, W. R. (2004). *Action inquiry: The secret of timely and transformational leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Torbert, W. R. (2013, June). Listening into the dark: An essay testing the validity and efficacy of collaborative developmental action inquiry for describing and encouraging transformations of self, society, and scientific inquiry. *Integral Review: A Transdiciplinary & Transcultural Journal for New Thought, Research & Praxis, 9*(2), 264-299.

Trouillot, M.-R. (1995). *Silencing the past: Power and the production of history*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Turnbull, S. (2002). Social construction research and theory building. *Advances in Developing Human Resources , 4*(3), 317 - 334.

van Dijk, T. A. (1993, April). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse and Society, 4*(2), 249-283.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1963). *Thought and language*. (E. Hanfmann, G. Vakar, Eds., E. Hanfmann, & G. Vakar, Trans.) Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press.

Wallace, M. I., & Smith, T. H. (Eds.). (1994). *Curing violence*. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press.

Ward, J., & Winstanley, D. (2005). Coming out at work: performativity and the recognition and renegotiation of identity. *The Sociological Review* , 447-475.

Weingarten, K. (2003). *Common shock: Witnessing violence every day*. New York, NY: New American Library.

Weisberg, R. (2003). Restorative justice and the dangers of community. *Stanford Public Law and Legal Theory Working Papers Series*.

Weitzman, E. A., & Weitzman, P. F. (2000). Problem solving and decision making in conflict resolution. In M. Deutsch, & P. T. Coleman (Eds.), *The hanbook for conflict resolution* (pp. 185-209). San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

Wheatley, M. J. (1999). *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering order in a chaotic world*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

White, M. (2000). Re-engaging with history: the absent but implicit. In M. White, *Reflections of narrative practice* (pp. 35-38). Adelaide, South Australia: Dulwich Centre.

White, M. (2007). *Maps of narrative practice*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

White, M., & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York, NY: WW Norton.

Whitehead, C. (2008). *The origin of consciousness in the social world*. Charlottesville , VA: Imprint Academic Publishing.

Wilkerson, I. (2010). *Warmth of other suns: The epic story of America's great migration*. New York: Vintage Books/ Random House.

Wilshire, B. (1985). Role playing and identity: The limits of theatre as metaphor. *Human Studies, 8*, 393-401.

Wilson, W. J. (1978). *The declining significance of race*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Winslade, J. (2006, Summer). Use of discursive positions in mediation. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly, 23*(no 4).

Winslade, J. (2009, September). Tracing lines of flight: Implications of the work of Gilles Deleuze for narrative practice. *Family Preocess, 48*, 332-346.

Winslade, J., & Cotter, A. (1997). Moving From problem solving to narrative approaches in mediation. In G. Monk, J. Winslade, K. Crocket, & D. Epston (Eds.), *Narrative therapy in practice: The archaeology of hope* (pp. 252-274). SanFrancisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Winslade, J., & Monk, G. (2001). *Narrative mediation: A new approach to conflict resolution*. SanFrancisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Winslade, J., & Monk, G. (2008). *Practicing narrative mediation: Loosening the grip on conflict*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

Winslade, J., & Williams, M. (2012). *Safe and peaceful schools: Addressing conflict and eliminating violence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Witt, R. (2009, January). The study guide to '*Trouble in Mind*' by Alice Childress. Milwaukee, WI: The Milwaukee Repertory Theater.

Wittgenstein, L. (1978). *Philosophical investigations*. London, UK: Sage.

Wright, B. E. (1979). *The psychopathic racial personality*. Chicago: First World Publishers.

Yoder, C. (2005). *The little book of trauma healing*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Zarif, T. (2012). Grounded theory method: An overview. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business, 4*(5), 969.

Zehr, H. (1990). *Changing lenses*. Scottsdal, PA: Herald Press.

Zehr, H. (1995). *The little book of restorative justice*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Zehr, H. (2002). *The little book of restorative justice (2nd ed.)*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.